

# THE MOUTH OF SAURON VOL VII (III): JUNE 1991

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Work Phone (0532)-335175. I do not return calls.

The Mouth Of Sauron is a purest postal diplomacy zine which prints diplomacy articles and diplomacy variants. I also try to fit in some bridge and SF along the way. If you don't like it don't get the zine!

Game-only issues trundle along as appropriate. Issues such as this one come out whenever I have the time, money and inclination to produce them.

TMOS is available for one of the following: (a) Trade. (b) Contribution (letter, article or other). (c) Whim (I like you) or (d) Money.

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UK : You send me money and I tell you when it's run out. Simple, eh?

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## HELLO TO

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## WELCOME BACK TO

Michael Hopcroft, 420 SE Grand Ave E215, Portland, OR 97214. USA

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## EDITORIAL

Is it reasonable for a subscriber to ask for a refund of his credit because (s)he does not like the zine?

Recently somebody sent James a letter asking about Variants & Uncle and James returned a letter and a selection of back issues. This resulted in a subscription. Then after two issues the new subscriber asked for a return of his credit.

Now James is not as blunt and forthright as I am. I would tell the cretin that I had conversicated their remaining credit and that they had no remaining credit to return. I'd also suggest that they were utter scum and that they should leave the diplomacy hobby as quickly as possible. But James has a problem. As the person concerned is a Springboardian he would probably write a letter to Ganny Collman (currently going through a 'I like feuds' stage) and James doesn't want to disrupt the flow of noviciates into V&U.

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# DANGER-FEUDING IS FUN

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Still, that's his problem.

However.... another incident which has happened to the poor boy is that a Springboardian sent a duff cheque and James only noticed this after mailing the back issues which had been ordered! Here, despite letters asking for a new cheque there has been no answer. (I must say that all the Springboardians I have had have always been very nice, even those bounders who didn't resubscribe.)

Onto other matters. Although my PhD is a CASE award, which means that I work for an industrial sponser, I do not receive any extra money from them. However, I can work at their factory in Manchester in which case they will pay me. Obviously it is in my interest to maximise the amount of time spent in Manchester whilst minimising the damage done by my not working in this period. Dear, dear, dear old supervisor has not realized the lure of money in the pocket over that of research...

Recently I had a visit from my industrial supervisor to see what work I had done this year. In my talk, I emphasised that I had spent my time ~~emailing people round the world~~ studying models. However I couldn't make any additional progress until I had some experimental data to compare with these models, and I could only get this data from their experimental results... Hence I would need to visit Manchester to extract this information from their records.

All was going well until Supervisor butted in. Did I know why I wanted to go there? (Yes...I wanted the money) Did I have a plan of work? (Yes...get the money into my bank account) When would I know that I was getting good results? (When my bank manager started speaking to me again.) How long would it take? (As long as possible.) He successfully torpedoed my plans.

But, I have a cunning plan. I retired home for a week and a half holiday. I schemed and planned. I have come up with the perfect plan...

Next time dear old supervisor sees me and asks what work I have done in the last week I shall say.. "Not much, you know I really do need that experimental data..." He should get the message...

Alas, things are not working out just as I had planned. The industrial sponser don't have the exact data that I require, they have been looking at more complicated compounds (mixtures of simple compounds) which often contain additives which change the compounds behaviour. Furthermore, for the few compounds they have studied which would be relevant they have not performed sufficient tests for me to extract the information that I require. (For those of you with some Chemistry, I need to get pre-exponential factors for solid-phase decomposition reactions)

It turns out that a visit to Manchester will not be the jolly that I had expected, the company doesn't want to put one of their technicians to churn out the results I need; there are suggestions that I should goto Manchester to perform the experiments myself! This is not ideal. Conducting simple experiments that a technician can do is a waste of my time, and why do you think I decided to concentrate on Mathematics rather than Chemistry?

The end result is that I am going to have spend time in Manchester doing simple experiments and examining the data. With the end of my first year in sight I also need to get that data as quickly as possible and to start using it in some of my models. This then needs to be written-up for my end of year 'Progress Report', which means I have to spend time learning whatever WP system I have access to and sussing out how to send it to a nice laser-printer. Sigh. That means even less time to do proper work, which means working longer hours....

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Hence, it's likely that zine-production will become even more erratic than it already is. It has been pointed out that it is very difficult knowing if you've missed an issue of this zine as production is already erratic and with the numbering system including game-only issues you won't know if you've missed a 'proper' issue just going by numbers. To help you out, the last issue I produced was VOLUME VI (XX), dated February 1991.

However, years as a Gallimaufry reader are paying off. I'm going to give predicated publication dates. (I think this is a sign of increasing old age.)

1991 Summer (either just before or after ManorCon), October.

1991 February, Easter, ManorCon, October.

1992 January, ManorCon. As this will be my final year as a Postgrad, and I may have to face the transition into a job, I doubt that I'll produce more than two or three issues in 1992.

It just isn't possible to find the time to produce more than four issues a year (five if I'm lucky) and I wouldn't want to produce anymore-- for one thing I couldn't afford the overseas mailing costs!

A book I have recently enjoyed is Dianna Wynne Jones' *"Fire and Hemlock"*. Although I've had this since before Xmas I have only just read it.

One of the reasons that I put it at the bottom of the pile of books to read was that I'd somehow got the idea that it was a "horror" book. The back-page mentions Halloween and the cover of a teenage girl in a burning garden wasn't inspiring. I left it until latter and didn't really want to read it, yes I do really hate Horror Books (Gor(e) Books)!

Needless to say, I had the wrong impression, it isn't a Horror Book. No Horror whatsoever. Indeed it is difficult to put the book into any of the comfortable little boxes we like to use to describe books. It's set over the previous nine years, there's no references to contemporary events so it's the past nine years from whenever it is now. It describes the events of a very ordinary English girl living with ordinary parents who divorce and who is then brought up by her grandmother. Along the way the book deals with the problems of being the only child caught between two opposing factions, it covers her childhood and how her childhood friendships develop as she matures.

The events described in the book are described in flash-back, as Polly slowly remembers her past. It isn't until late in the book that we finally decide if the events Polly has difficulty remembering ever happened or if she was a disturbed child who made them-up to disguise the pain caused by her parents divorce. And even then, very little happens. Possible mysterious events are described, but they might have an equally mundane explanation.

This book combines elements of the contemporary world, fantasy, fairy tales and superstitions of village-folk. Until the last few pages we have no idea what's really happening. It's this very mundane approach that I like; hints are dropped, village folk have superstitions but it is all very low-key.

Something I noticed about the format of the book, and something which is becoming increasingly common in novels, is the use of different type-faces. It's simple, and increasingly easy with new technology to do this in printed books. Purists may, I suppose, object on the grounds that by contrasting different sections of the book the publisher detracts from the printed word; reduces the worth of the novel in 'its own right'. On the other hand, why not use different text styles to differentiate between the narrative and 'reprinted' letters sent between the two main characters?

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When Polly types a letter, it contains a large number of typing errors which can be reproduced *ad verbatim*, when reprinted in a different type-style they feel more like retyped letters; I suppose it adds more atmosphere to the book.

In Dolcshtoss 149 (March 1991) TOM TWEEDY writes:-

" An interesting question cropped up in the PV 'Deadly Nightshades' game. [Martin Taylor, the eventual winner, wrote] 'I'm not quite sure whether equal second has any real meaning in a game where one player is an outright winner. If I go on to get eighteen centres, does that still make France, Germany and Russia equal second? Or are they just losers along with Turkey, Italy and England?'"

"[I replied] ... 'I have never seen this particular topic discussed before... I have always assumed that equal second is... 'equal' However it all depends on how the Diplomacy Statistician, Richard Sharp, sees it... The difference it makes to me, as a GM, is that I'd make a note of the agreed vote in the final statement I send to Richard Sharp. It makes no difference to the outright winner, of course, but as far as I see it the '=2nd' unanimous agreement is as legal as any '4-way draw' agreement.'"

"Of course, if one were to get to 18 centres without any such agreement being made, then the other surviving players are placed merely on the final supply center count at the end of the game."

Richard doesn't comment on this. The matter of the legality of EGP's depends on the house rules of the zine, as there is nothing against =2 proposals in the rulebook. Indeed one might argue that in a game which finishes in an outright win it is fairer to lump all remaining players together rather than to separate them by supply center count. The idea here would be that they are all guilty of allowing somebody to win and so should all receive the same rating.

Indeed in a North American Rating System this idea was taken one step further. Arguing that a person in 2nd position has played the worst in allowing someone to win (they have the most incentive to prevent a win) they received a lower rating than someone who survived on fewer centers!

I do not approve of this view, it penalises people for playing for second but there is no rule-book justification for doing so! If you can't win and you can't secure a draw, then you might as well take as many centers as you can. Does this mean that the concept of a 'place' behind a winner is one that I approve of? I suppose by my last argument I at least recognise that it has some validity. Certainly I'd rather finish on 16 centers than 6 in a game I lose in.

Yes, I do support rating systems that differentiate between losers. I'd rather win than draw, draw than survive and survive than be eliminated. I strive for the best result possible in any situation, the concept of place behind a win has meaning. And if people want to recognize that they all played equally badly in allowing somebody else to win then =2 is fine by me.



## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

((As mentioned earlier, due to a computer problem most of your letters are being held over for the next issue))

BEN GOODALE (Glasgow, Scotland) "As to Utter Drive!. I was disappointed with the response to the team-up issue ((reviewed last time)) in fandom (not just you in particular). In fact I was appalled. I guess that the market for an off-beat gaming zine has shrivelled up, especially when the subbers probably stopped playing games two years ago."

"I do have tentative plans for something else... an apa in the format of the late Drunk & Disorderly. This would have no particular theme, just a general bias towards fiction, reviews and opinion. I see it as featuring games too, if people want to write about them, and I will probably run an En Garde! game within it."

((MN: The fact is, the team-up was neither very good or interesting! Also two-year gaps between issues is not conducive to generating feed-back. You must do better!))

((MN: The apa sound interesting. I'd love to contribute, but I'd be suprised if it ever got off the ground!))

JOHN WILMAN (Cambridge) "Here's hoping that the real world has been put back firmly in its place."

"I rather like the best zines I sub to at the moment -- Ode, Step and Electric Monk -- and I'm hoping that my subzines will enliven the publications whose pages they grace -- Mopsy and Smodnoc. I couldn't face running a zine again. It's fine until you've finished the last stencil, then the realization dawns that you are only half-way through. I can only work to deadlines anyway, so a subzine (or two!) is definitely the answer for me, at least until I can afford a more suitable outlet for my writings."

"I'd be quite happy to try a FTF game of Gunboat at a con some time, like they play in the States -- I never seem to get much sense out of my opponents at ManorCon!"

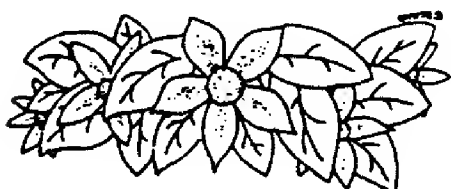
((MN: Unfortunately I have come to the conclusion that my best years as an active fan are past me, it's all down hill for the next forty years until I retire. Then I'll have time to devote more attention to fandom!))

((MN: Sadly being a Postgraduate is not a half-way house between the lazyness of undergrads and the hussle and bussle of work, it is an (almost) full time job in its own right with tight schedules to keep to. As an undergraduate I could always spend a minimum of fifteen hours a week on fandom (and that excludes time for adjudicating games!). nowdays I seem to be lucky to get four hours a week including time to adjudicate games. I'm finding it hard to cut back my activities, but I'm slowly getting there.))

((MN: I suppose this is one of the reasons way I am increasingly attracted towards SF and Media fandom, they run at a more sedate pace which is more appropriate to my reduction in spare-time.))

((MN: Noticing that John was increasing his hobby profile I wondered if this was a prelude to returning to the fold as a publisher. Apparently not. John Colledge is also running a multitude of subzines these days and given his, justified, reputation as a player I wonder if he's considering building up a publishing profile as a prelude to launching a zine. I think I'll ask him...))

((MN: Yes, I'll run a Gunboat game at ManorCon; how do you feel about it being on an 'improved' map))



The White Rose  
Perfection In A Plant

## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS (2)

MICHAEL HOPCROFT (Portland, OREGON USA) "I have been absent from your mailbox for a very long time. I'm certainly not 'important' anymore, and I had to fold NUTMGS in a verry messy way. But I'm still plugging away."

"1990 is a year I want to forget ever happened. It was nothing but trouble for me, losing my computer to a burglar and having to move four times. I'm now settled again, but will probably move again (!) and cut my rent in half (I'm currently paying 61% of my monthly income in rent). Perhaps I will eventually have money to buy zines again. I still miss having all that stuff in my mailbox -- what I usually get now are credit card scams and adds for adjustable beds. Both of these I find offensive. How did they get my address? And how come the poeple I want to get mail from don't mail me any?"

"I'm trying to decide if I should climb back into the ring. Perhaps the huge amount of money George Forman will get for being knocked unconscious should encourage me. It seems strange that only two years ago Julie Martin called me 'one of the most prolific writers in the hobby', and then a whole year goes by without even a keystroke. Shows you just how 'invaluable' I am. As for how much I was missed. I do not see a groundswell of support. I think most hobbyists would say 'Michael Hopcroft? Who was he? Didn't he die or something?'"

"My time usually gets occupied, but I wish I were more active. I have few significant correspondents, not nearly as many as I used to, and the discussions are getting old. Last Tuesday I received a cricket ball in the mail from an Australian correspondent. We'd been discussing cricket for over a year, and now she's sent me a ball. So now I have a critcket ball, although I still can't bowl fast. The seam down the middle is sometrhing that I'm not used to. This being America I've never seen footage from an actual game. The sports channels on cable are specialized, but not that specialized. I did see a little professional snooker, though, which is really weird to me.

((MN How should the Hobby respond to publishers who drop out and fold messily? An eternal question. My own views are that it depends on the manner of the dropout but more important the circumstances surrouding the dropout. In Michael's case I'd say.....WELCOME BACK!!!!))

((MN I spend around 22% of my income on rent/bills (excluding food). This really does beg the question where the hell the rest of my money go since I seem to be eternally poor!))

((MN There was a program on the TV recently about companies which supply manufactures with trends on which types of people are buying what and how much they are spending on it. In the States they are able to build up fantastically detailed databases. Much of this information coming from credit-card companies, who sell this kind of information, and supermarkets. Really strange. However, it's not junk mail that I object to but junk telephone calls, which I consider to be a real invasion of privacy.))

((MN Cricket, if you have never seen a game, you'll have some strange ideas about what it I am definitely getting older in my attitudes. I've started watching and enjoying Golf on the TV! Luckily Snooker remains something that I can switch on and then immediately switch off.))

((MN I'd have to say that the next writer would be a better George Foreman...))

LARRY PEERY (San Diego, USA) "Suprise --- I'm back! Apparently some people didn't believe me when I said I was going to take a sabbatical after last year's DIPCON and turning DIPLOMACY WORLD over to David Hood. Still, even I didn't dream that it would last a full seven months. But I needed the rest and a chance to recharge my batteries: I think in the long run the hobby will benefit from it. I'm sure many of you were as tired of listening to me preach at you ((...)) as I was of giving sermon after sermon on the hobby's fall from a state of grace into...wel



## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS (3)

LARRY PEERY (San Diego, USA)

"After ten years of intense hobby activity I needed a rest. It felt good to be able to kick back and do some serious reading, listen to a lot of music, and pitz around the house. Still, standing still for very long is not my forte.

Given all the things that have happened to me in the past few years I decided, after WORLD DIPCON II, that it was time for a major career change, one that would take me into a more secure middle age. And so I ended up in the mortgage banking field... I'm doing what I do best --- shuffling papers."

"I've spent a lot of time in the last few months thinking about the last mailing I sent out and the direction I wanted to move in when I returned to the hobby. I realize that my stated plans were too ambitious for my current state. Once upon a time I might have been able to pull them off, but not now. DIPLOMACY is no longer the be all and end all that it once was to me. I'm going to work harder at working less and enjoying it more."

"So, what now?"

"...I also intend to continue with WORLD DIPLOMACY, although on a sharply cutback scale."

"...Frankly I'm concerned about DIPCON and how the Canadians are handling it. I got the impression at last year's DIPCON, when they got the bid, that the Canadian's really didn't know what to do with it, and nothing I've seen since changes my mind. If they don't get off their butts and start promoting the thing soon; they may end up with a real poor turnaout from the States."

"There has been a lot of chatter in the hobby press in ther last few months about WORLD DIPCON. Much of it is amusing. Some of it is sickening. And some of it downright scary. I'm amazed at how few few were present at the creation of WORLD DIPCON and how many now claim to be its custodians."

"Be that as it may, my main concern is with getting the best representatives possible from the American Hobby to Australia next year. Jason Bergmann, the winner of WORLD DIPCON II; the winner of this year's DIPCON; and, no doubt, others have a valid claim to represent us. The question is will they have the means to go? It's going to cost from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to send an American to WDC III next year. To make sure our best go, regardless of their financial situation, I am establishing a fund to help with that goal. To get started I am donating all of the proceeds from registration at this year's PEERICON XI to that fund. Now, I need a couple of volunteers to help with project. Anyone willing and able?"

((MN: My response to the previous Peery mailing were given in Volume Six: 17 (November 1990), my opinions remain the same.))

((MN: Still it's good to have Larry back and planning an active role in the hobby, even if I have doubts as to his ability to produce WORLD DIPLOMACY, I also have doubts as to how long he can keep up this facade of indifference to the 'state-of-the-hobby'. Indeed I already detect signs that this resolve is crumbling.))

((MN: But the last paragraph is pure Peery, a new idea and boundless energy to set things up. And what's even more unusual is that it is a good Peery idea! I haven't see any mention in the UK hobby about sending an 'official' representative over to WDC. I don't think we could raise enough money to pay all the expenses for our 'best' player but we could make a significant contribution. Are the UK conventions discussing this at an informal level yet? RJW? Iain? It would be nice if we could set something up, a more general mechanism to ensure that we had to money to send someone to every non-UK WDC. I would envisage money being raised direct via the main conventions and also by fund-raising activities, similiar to the PD auction in the States.))

## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS (4)

RICHARD WALKERDINE (Hitchin) "Hobby Publicity etc Although I disagree with your opinion that the hobby is in decline (I would say that it has reached a level of relative stability) I accept your criticism that I have done nothing about promoting it. Since taking over the Hobby Development Fund I have (a) sorted out its finances, (b) arranged additional funding for the HDF (via ManorCon), (c) confirmed that Gibsons have adequate flyers and are still issuing them. But that's all I've done."

"For the future I'm intending to provide some support for Pete Sullivan's orphans work (if he needs it), get an updated Novice Guide organized, and provide Gibsons with new flyers when they are needed. But before anything else is done about additional publicity I want to be quite sure that the hobby has adequate services in place (gamestart services etc) to cater for them.. The next issue of Pieces of Eight will address this issue and I'll make sure you get a copy."

((MN: You certainly seem to have done a lot of work, and more importantly, have definite plans about how you see the HDF working. This is good, and far better than the secrecy which has surrounded it in the past. However, the main problem appears to be publicity and I'd suggest that you consider putting all 'mainstream' editors on the PIE mailing list so that they are aware of what you are doing. I also think that the ManorCon Booklet should contain a review of each year's work and expenditure, after all you do ask ManorCon attendees to contribute towards the HDF.))

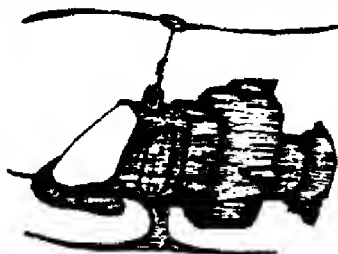
"ManorCon: I'm pleased to see you approve of the gradual move towards making ManorCon a wider mixture of Dip and non-Dip events as this has been the central theme of the efforts I've made over the past few years. We now have regular tournaments of United, Soccerleague, 5-a-side, Rostherne Games, 1830-type games and (from this year) Bridge --all of which are miles away from Diplomacy and help to attract a much wider audience than a con built around a diplomacy tournament and little else. It's my hope that this process will continue."

"As for numbers, please remember that 300ish is the most we can handle at High Hall -- and we've reached that level already. We cannot go for a big increase this year because we simply couldn't accomodate one. But from 1992 we will be at Lake Hall where we can house upwards of 400, so next year is the time to aim for a wider audience but not before."

"On the matter of contacting University Societies, and despite what you may think, be assured that I have always wanted as much publicity in the Universities as possible-- the official name of ManorCon is the "Universities Diplomacy TOurnament" after all. And of course we always get a good turnout from Liverpool, Oxford and Birmingham itself. As for the others, it certainly isn't for want of trying (and most definitely not due to any lack of effort on Andy's part -- he's always done a splendid job for us and I'll thank you you not to criticise about subjects of which you know nothing). No the problem is getting the information to the right people."

"Every year Andy sends out 100 or more flyers to all the main universities, but because we have no idea of precisely where they should go he has to send them to the 'Wargames Society' or 'Diplomacy Society' in the hope that they will get through to the right people. Some do, some don't. This year he has acquired a list of all the British Universities and technical colleges and is sending out over 200 flyers in the hope that a fair proportion will end up somewhere useful."

"But it's all a bit hit and miss and, without any proper guide to what societies are in existence at the various colleges and without much response to the many requests we've made to the hobby at large to tell us who to write to, there's not much else we can do. If you have any bright ideas about how to get the information across I'd love to hear it (and so would Andy) but continuing criticism when we're already banging our heads against a brick



**GET TO MANORCON - THE EASY WAY**



## FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS (5)

((MN: Discounting the Liverpool team (who are all graduates) the only student teams at ManorCon are Birmingham and Oxford, accounting for, roughly, four percent of UK universities. As Richard has already commented one of his aims is to attract more people to ManorCon (and hopefully into the hobby). An obvious group to target is students, something that ManorCon isn't getting right at the moment. What can be done?))

((MN My criticism of Andy's efforts stems purely from being on the receiving end of them. I have been at two different Universities and during the time I was active in the 'games' societies I never saw any publicity for ManorCon. My, wrong, assumption was that Andy never mailed anything out. Richard claims that it was probably mailed to the wrong address and never passed on. However if it has taken this long to obtain a list of all UK Universities and Colleges then I must say that I am very unimpressed by what can only be described as amateur organization, this information should have been obtained yeases ago.))

((MN It strikes me as being relatively easy to obtain a complete list of correct addresses for societies at British Universities. A start in the right direction would be to compile a list of which hobby members are at which Universities, and then to ask them to provide the details! A list of hobby members who are students should be relatively easy to compile for someone with a wide range of trades. Compiling a complete address list (for socities) should only take two or three years.))

((As for Richard's claim that they have attempted this before by making repeated claims for hobby members to help out, I can only say that I have never any such requests.))

((As well as compiling a correct list of addresses, I think it may be profitable to change the flyer sent to societies. I don't know what the current flyer contains but would be interested in looking at it. Finally, depending on the University the correct name to use may be one (or more) from...DIPLOMACY, BOARDGAMES, WARGAMES, ROLEPLAYING...))

"World Dip Con Despite what the Americans may say, or think, or do, the position is very simple. World Dip Con was invented and originated by the ManorCon Committee and through our agreement was established as an event which would be held every two years and would rotate around the world during a six-year period. We accepted that America would host WDC II in 1990 and that Australia would host WDC III in 1992. And that's it. There is no World Dip Con Charter, no ad hoc committee, and no other form of organization of an sort that is required on this side of the Atlantic and if the Americans want to arrange one then they had bloody well better discuss it with use first which they have singularly failed to do in order to get our approval."

"The British, as represented by the organizers of ManorCon, will host World Dip Con IV in Birmingham England in July 1994. There is no doubt that about that, no room for argument and (I hope) no room for misunderstanding. In short, the UK invented the concept and the UK will be the hosts every sixth year --- the rest of the world (and that includes the USA) can sort out the intervening years in any way they wish. If that means they have to invent charters and committees in order to do it thn that's their buisness, I'm not interested."

((MN I'd only add that perhapes ManorCon should decide which part of the world gets WDC in the intervening years and leave the site discussion down to local fans. In the event there is no agreement then we should nominate a site.))

**BOB DAVIES** (Bracknell) "Poor old you having to use the NAG library. It's about as friendly as a cornered rat. The main computer network here is not connected to JANET because ther could be a risk of university boffins hacking onto the system and planting virses, henc my resort to an older form of contact..."

"Incidentally, our research on the Kuwatii oilfield problem showed there would be no significant climatic change due to the smoke except that the Monsoon in India may be delayed by upto two weeks."

((MN: Bob, you know how to give a newcomer confidence don't you!))

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS OF THINGS

I recall reading recently (perhapes in NERTZ?) that "Chaos Theory" was wrong because it's obvious that a butterfly in Norwich can't *really* change the weather.

This, of course, misses the point, that in chaotic systems minute differences in initial conditions, that are too small to measure, *may* result in radically different outcomes. The question is then, is the weather a Chaotic system? Can small changes make such big differences in predicted weather patterns? The answer is yes, current models can be very sensitive to initial conditions. This is why short-term forecasting is generally accurate and long-term forecasting is not. In the short-term little differences (measuring errors, finitenes of measuring points) do not cause much divergence in predicted weather patterns, but in the long-term they may do so.

The important word is *may*. The reason why long-term predictions are sometimes accurate is that sometimes the weather is a 'chaotic system' and sometimes it is not. If the initial conditions are basically, say, A then we don't need to know the exact conditions, but if they are, say, B we need to know exactly what they are. Hence the weather *may* or not behave chaotically.

Moving back to the butterfly, then with our curen models it is possible that a very small change in data could in the *long* term cause a significant change in what we expect the weather to be. However our models aren't that accurate, and we aren't sure that are models are completely correct.

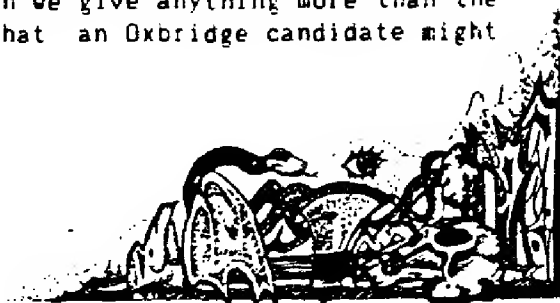
Is Human history predictable? That might almost be an Oxbridge entrance paper question. Certainly there seems to be some kind of cyclity in the rise and fall of civilizations, Empires and Nations; but how much of that pattern is determined by the viewer seeking it? On a smaller scale the random nature of individuals would seem to be make prediction impossible. But can't we apply statistical techniques to eliminate flucturation, and if we ask the right question perhapes flucturation does not effect the answer? After all does human nature evolve? Do we want anything different in life from what a Victorian or a Roman would have wanted?

The latter-half of the above paragraph may be recognized by readers of Isaac Asimov's Foundation series, as the basis for Hari Seldon's science of psychonistorry which used statistical techniques to eliminate the fluctuations caused by individuals and to predict the broad-outcome of the future. The canvas is large, but large brush strokes are used and the detail not filled in.

Even when Asimov first published the short-stories which would latter become the Foundation Trilogy there would have been scientific doubt as to the possibility of such a science. But has the "discovery" of Chaotic dynamics finally knocked psychohistory on the head? If we are unable to predict the weather in ten days time, can we predict human activity in ten years, one hundred years or even ten thousand years?

Perhapes we can, perhapes we can't. After all, there are some situations in which we can predict the long-term behaviour of the weather accurately. Perhapes it's just a matter of forcing the political situation into the right initial conditions (a non-chaotic domain). In "Second Foundation" the Mule upsets the carefully laid plans of Seldon's team; perhapes by that time the 'model' had entered a chaotic parameter-region?

Alas, it doesn't really seem possible to put forward a convincing argument in favour of physcohistory. Even if we accept predictability and cyclicty in human affairs, can we quantitive things more than that? Can we give anything more than the kind of woefully inadequate general mechanism that an Oxbridge candidate might sugest?



## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS OF THINGS

But we shouldn't let science get in the way of enjoying a good piece of fiction (and indeed the original trilogy is enjoyable). Or should we? Is scientific validity (or historical plausability) a pre-requisite for a good story? In reviewing "THE HANDMAIDEN'S TALE" Joseph Nicholas comments that:-

*"...--although I haven't read the novel, and have to assume that what is left is reasonable faithful of it-- I found that even on its own terms the scenario doesn't make sense... Such questions might seem pettifogging, but because we are given no answers they fatally undermine the scenario's credibility. What Margaret Atwood is offering us, after all, is not a metaphorical vision of the future but a literal one, an actual prediction of how things might turn out and what we (or, more correctly, women) should therefore guard against. Thus one hole in the extrapolative reasoning is one hole too many; and her warning collapses."*

An interesting comment, which Joseph might qualify by talking about the difference between fiction as escapism and fiction as a medium for the teaching of ideas. But at the moment I'm more interested in the concept that a film must bare a resemblance to a book, if only this were true! Indeed, it seems to be an ever increasing trend that films bare little or no resemblance to a book they are supposdely based on. Recent examples which spring to mind are "BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES" (although in this case it's more a poor adaptation rather than baring no resemblance), "THE LIVES AND LOVES OF A SHE DEVIL" and "UNION STREET". Depending on your own view one might add "TOTAL RECALL" to that list, personally I not only think it will be on of the classic SF films of the 1990's but that it is a good adaptation of the short story.

One of the side-effects of recent research in Chaotic systems has been a resurgence of public interest in science. However, it is perhaps a sign of our times that that interest comes more through pretty-pictures (Mandelbrot sets) than through an appreciation of the usefulness of Science. Indeed it almost seems the case that the Public views Science not as something useful but as a quaint little hobby, a relic of time gone-past when people had nothing else to occupy their time with. Topics guarenteed to generate media-interest are such things as "paranormal activity", "ftl travel", "UFO's"... things which contemporary science looks down upon.

As public interest in Science declines from the healthy interest of the Victorians and Edwardians (when science was POPULAR) we seem to inhabit a world that is becoming a pale imitation of the dream-world of the soaps and sit-coms: where solutins are easier, quicker and simpler than in the real world. Are we in danger of being swamped by imagery of a fantasy world which we harken to?

One of the classics of SF is Ray Bradbury's "FAHRENHEIT 451". Published in 1976 it primarily deals with the "dangers" of books, writing and original thinking. An oppressive Government has corrupted the aims of the Fire Service. Instead of putting fires out their task is to find books and burn them. books are dangerous. The man who reads, is a dangerous man for he has pretensions and airs that seperate him from the mass of humanity. As we know from events this century one of the first acts of a totalitarian regime is to crack down on the intelligentsia. Despite being an ever-decreaing section of the public, increasingly isolated from the rest of the population, people with the intelligence to express their own views are not only dangerous but act against the best interests of the teaming masses. It isn't a case of everybody been given the same chance in life, they must be equal in ability to understand and express themselves; it's easier to eliminate the top than to raise standards.

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS OF THINGS

The Chief Fireman says " ...Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against. So! A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the weapon. Breach man's mind. Who knows who might be the target of the well read man? Me? I won't stomach them for a minute."

"...The home environment can undo a lot that you try to do at school. That's why we've lowered the kindergarten age year after year until now we are almost snatching them from the cradle..."

"...Give a man a few lines of verse and he thinks he's the Lord of all Creation. You think you can walk on water with your books. Well, the world can get by just fine without them."

Humanity is happier when all have been reduced to the same level of thought and creativity, or is that really that the Government is happier? Why do I mention this? Because the main form of entertainment (though-suppression) is soaps, in particular an advanced form of soap-opera sent to the homes of all decent citizens who have four-walled TV screens. Things have become so advanced that the viewers play characters in the soap in something akin to a scripted interactive roleplaying game. The latest in mind-control, how long until it is possible to run it here?

(Basically, the use of multiple screens creates a 3d effect so the viewer feels that they are in the same room as the actors and the scripts contain sections when the viewer reads out lines in response to comments in the play...this might even be taken a step further given advances in computing where the plot depends on the viewers individual choice and so in different households different things happen...somekind of virtual reality setup.)

One of the better pieces of fiction in the latest issue of WORKS (a small press publication dealing with SF) also touches on the overpowering numbness generated by soaps. Craig Herbertson's "NEXUS", which again features rooms with four screens in; this time one each corner so wherever you are in the room you can watch the TV. Unfortunately you can't switch the damn thing off and Soap 7 (the most popular soap) is increasingly taking up an ever increasing percentage of the output...eventually almost reaching 24 hours a day output. The Soap program is sentient, a virus, propagating throughout the World and soaking up reality....turning humanity into a sea of captive vegetables.

I like it, it's the kind of short piece of fiction that represents the best aspects of small presses. Indeed WORKS is one of the better small-presses and one that I continually look forward to receiving. Given the wide-range of material that small-presses contain, both stylistically and quality-wise, it isn't suprising that small-press publications generate such a mixed reception; it is unlikely that you will enjoy every piece in any particular one, you may even dislike a sizable number. Although WORKS does contain some of the 'speculative' fiction that seems to be 'in' at the moment, recent issues seems to have featured a more balanced content and each issue always contains a majority of pieces that I enjoy.

The resurgence interest in SF poetry in recent times has been marked in the small presses, and WORKS contains many of the best examples that I have seen. Why it has taken so long for SF to move into poetry strikes me as being strange. I would have thought that poetry and SF would be kindred spirits, that just as the abstraction that is required to reduce a novel to short-story can produce superior SF then the reduction from short-story to POETRY should concentrate the mind and produce an equally increase in quality. (Of course for this argument to be true one will need to define what one means by better.)

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS

One of the reasons why WORKS stands above so many other small press publications is that it is more than just a collection of pieces of fiction. The WORKS team provide a coverage of the small press scene and regular provide reviews and news of other operators. They also put on nice touches, such as a little biography for each writer and a letter-column which is more than just a listing of readership likes and dislike of recent issues.

Just why do scientists look down upon paranormal activity? I wouldn't want to suggest that I believe in the paranormal or that such things threaten the scientific basis of the modern world. Perhaps the explanation is envy, the role that modern-day Science plays to the paranormal is similar to that the Church played to Science at the time of the Renaissance.

Hence the paranormal represents a threat to what we believe in and to the principles which have guided our civilization over countless centuries. And the analogy goes further, Science is a religion with a hierarchy (Dr. Prof) and there is a long apprenticeship before the newcomers are accepted into the fold. Those that are unsuitable are weeded out and are unable to understand the 'inner-workings' which are only understandable to the initiates. Those Scientists that look down in scorn at this structure are cast into the darkness as mavericks.

And just as Religion has slowly lost its meaning to the majority of the population, only paying lip-service to it at certain times, then Science has become isolated and remote; even feared.

Science dislikes mavericks, those that operate outside the established practices of tradition. Sometimes this works for good, those that promote 'false-religions' are jumped upon and ridiculed before they can damage the acceptance of the 'one-true religion'.

For example, the condemnation of those who heralded the arrival of Cold Fusion; they bypassed the Accepted Scientific Route in order to achieve (I suspect, and perhaps suspected by most Scientists) more worldly aims. The gathering of the Orthodox to destroy the mavericks was then only to have been expected. But are the 'heretics' (Hoyle, Arp, Bienvenie, Pons...) always wrong?

Science comes with inbuilt doctrines, and it can be slow to change these. There are countless examples of new ideas being ignored as unacceptable because they go against the accepted model. Because they go against this model then they are wrong by definition. It is worrying that established ideas are sometimes not based on the solidity of evidence that its supporters would have others believe. Of course, sometimes Science changes its ideas remarkably fast... witness the award of the Nobel Prize in Physics a few years ago for work on 'high-temperature' semi-conductors.

Science and technology, the same sides of a coin or different areas? I suppose technology is Applied Science, but then most Science these days seems to be Applied rather than 'basic'. Perhaps one area which retains an attraction for the Public is Robotics, of automation replacing the need for man to work. Just why this should be so appealing is difficult to know, as automation will put most people out of a job. In the 1960's the Concept of the Age of Leisure arose, when people would be able to devote all their time to the 'nice' things in life without dirtying their hands with such mundane things as working.

Although there have been SF written on this theme, I don't think that the implications of automation has really been considered. Will the populace be able to keep themselves occupied and fulfilled without jobs? Perhaps in order to keep people happy Government would have to resort to 'mind-control' (soaps) and elimination of that section of the public which would be able to survive. Instead of people aspiring to the heights of literature and understanding there would be a turning against those people that really find those subjects interesting, people who would stand above the rest of the population. Perhaps Bradbury is right, in order to keep the population happy the intelligentsia must be eliminated so that people remain happy in a sea of common mediocrity.

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS

The Scientists dislike of anything to do with the "paranormal" (because it does not fit in within established scientific knowledge, or perhaps more important, the scientific method) is reflected in the sharp divide between the genres of SF (the scientific method, and mainly physical science at that) and horror (the paranormal, does not fit nicely into Scientific boxes). Indeed there seems to be a strange dislike of anything non-scientific in SF. The dividing line between SF and Horror should be small, but at present the dividing line between published SF and Horror is large.

Only in small-press publications are pieces regularly published that stride this artificial boundary. (As often pointed out such a gap exists between SF and Fantasy, but I feel that the divide between SF and Horror is more 'artificial' than that between SF and Fantasy). Just why there should be such a divide in professionally published work I'm not sure. Is it a case that publishers want to slot material into well defined boxes so the public can recognize what they are buying, or are they merely responding to the public's demands for work that is readily classified as being either/or but never the twain? (Of course, I dislike the majority of Horror books I prefer the mechanisms of horror to be implied rather than given in its full gory detail...perhaps there is another column here on the role of 'gore' in horror and the role of 'technology' in SF?)

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Love it, or hate it, there is no denying that Cyberpunk was 'in' throughout the 1980's. Indeed today it barely seems possible to pick up a critical SF Journal without discovering yet another article on this revolutionary genre: either explaining what it is or how we are now grasping the appropriate technology. Yes this is seemingly one area of SF prediction which has come to pass (although Charles Stross in VECTOR 158 argues otherways).

VECTOR 159 contains K.Bailey's "CYPER -and some other- SPATIAL METAPHORS". INTERZONE 44 has Bruce Sterling on "The Cyberpunk Bust". VECTOR 158 has Charles Stross on "Myths, Computers and Cyberpunk"...the list is seemingly endless without recourse to the string of interviews with those ground-breaking authors.

Yet despite all the critical attention and acclaim lavished upon Cyberpunk I feel that it is over-hyped and has just been jumped on as the latest band-wagon: by authors wanting to sell, publishers wanting to sell and critics wanting to justify SF as being 'proper' fiction.

Perhaps I am a technological luddite, but I have not been impressed by most of the Cyberpunk that I have read. Perhaps after the hype I expected too much, but whilst the original ideas may have been exciting to SF readers when the material first appeared as we move ever nearer the end of the century it becomes difficult to appreciate what the fuss about. Perhaps you had there to be there to appreciate it?

As the technology outlined in the books becomes more attainable and more acceptable as a premise, rather than a proposition, then attention moves away from the technological ideas (and 'real-world' implications thereof) to a more sedate consideration of the books. And here I have my main problem. Cyberpunk seems to be poorly written and uninspiring (particularly in the case of William Gibson, great short stories but the novels...?).

Still, it may be the case that I have been unlucky in the books that I have read. One of the few books that might be called Cyberpunk that I enjoyed is John Brunner's 1975 "The Shockwave Rider", possibly the mother of all Cyberpunk. It would be interesting to learn what influence this book had on the likes of Gibson and Sterling.

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS

Brunner's background is that of a society where everything and anything can be done by sending the right sequence of codes through the net, this does not have to be done via a terminal but can even be done over a veephone. For instance, any Doctor treating you can access your full medical records by punching in the appropriate access code, even more importantly you can ensure that your mail always reaches you wherever you live and no matter how often you move by sending the right code to the Post Office. (Although it seems strange that in this technological base that there still is a Post Office.)

The result of this freedom of information is freedom of population movement. There is no need to stay in one place or one job, simply enter the code for your new job and new home and move there without having to worry about causing any hassle to anybody.

As well as the themes which we might expect to meet in such a book, the book considers the impact of such personal freedoms on Government. How does Government react to freedom of information combined with instant access?

One problem that Government faces is that as all countries get this technological base it becomes increasingly difficult to remain in front of the competition. Accordingly it becomes increasingly important to remain just one step (however small) in front of the "enemy".

The Governments's answer to increasing complications is Turnover. An intensive education centre for bright deprived kids, designed to maximise their ability to answer the increasingly complicated questions that face Government and so help the population: a new-kind of thought-police perhaps? Or is it?

Perhaps the reason why I enjoyed this so much is that the technological base which undermines it rarely comes to the fore. It may be implied, it may be discussed in conversation where necessary but it remains firmly in the background. The ins and outs of how it works are not important, what is important is the implications and the problems that arise from this new 'freedom' giving technology.

Perhaps, one reason why at this distance I dislike so many of those ground-breaking Cyberpunk books is that they no longer seem so adventurous in the technology they use. As computers surround us in increasing numbers then the (I guess most SF readers fall into this category) new reader accepts Cyberpunks starting-point and expects something else.

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Something I mentioned last time was the JUDGE DREDD magazine. It remains a must for 2000AD freaks although I am dissatisfied by the Judge Death script. This has been too lighthearted and comic in its portrayal of the young Death. Judge Death is not something that needs a light hand and a comic approach. After all one of his appeals is the seriousness that he approaches the task of preventing crime, and in this day of lawlessness (NMR's) and (civil) disorder in the Hobby perhaps we could wish his services. To quote "If you check our own statistics you'll see that 87% of convicted perpetrators ((dropouts)) will commit another offence....how many of the people I sentenced will re-offend..."

I've recently been mailed two mail-order catalogues. The first of these was from Andy Richards's COLD TONNAGE BOOKS who runs the Secondhand SF & Fantasy Section of the MURDER ONE AND SCIENCE FICTION SHOP (71/3 Charring Cross, LONDON). As well as those special editions beloved of collectors Andy carries books from the small publishing firms such as ARKHAM HOUSE (for those that don't know, ARKHAM HOUSE specialize in the Cthulhu Mythos). Mostly material for collectors (after all you don't want to order paperbacks through the post) although he does carry some of the better SF Journals such as the NEW YORK REVIEW of SCIENCE FICTION & JOURNAL WIRED.

## ON CYPERJUNK AND MANY KINDS

The other catalogue came from ANDROMEDA BOOKSHOP, which despite being just down the road from Derby I've never been to. Then again, the only times I go to Brum is when I go to ManorCon. As well as the to-be-expected extensive selection of new paperbacks Andromeda contains a large selection of magazines and various media related products and of the two mail-order services is more likely to have the wider appeal to Mouth of Sauron Readers.

Quick summary, if you want a specific edition/book or something obscure try Andy. If you want something more general try Andromeda. Alternatively try the Nelson approach and order random items from both...

WORKS. Dave W. Hughes, 12 Blakestones Road, Slaithwaite, HUDDERSFIELD. HD7 5UQ Single issues are 1.60.

Andy Richards, 136 New Road, Bedfont, Feltham, MIDDLESEX. TW14 8HT

Andromeda Bookshop, 84 Suffolk Street, BIRMINGHAM. B1 1TA.

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## A SPACE

It is frequently claimed that one of the reasons why there are so few zines which print diplomacy articles is that it has all been done before. It isn't possible to come-up with something new and there is no point in running articles that are rehashes of older material since most people have already seen it.

But is this phenomena one which is associated just with diplomacy-zines? One of the reasons why my interest in FRP zines declined is that every two years or so there would be a new generation of fans who would rerun the similar articles to those that I had seen in my youth. What might be of interest the first, or even second, time becomes pale the fourth or fifth time it is written.

Indeed this argument has been used in 'personal fandom' (and some sections of SFdom). Who wants to read yet another article on South Africa, or trips round the World? Seemingly not only has everything that is worth doing been done before but it has been done better previously.

Such arguments have merit, particularly for a critical reviewer but miss the point of fanzines and fandom. A new generation of fans are produced with no knowledge of the past. Should they re-invent the wheel or do something new?

Craig Naples' THINGY (White Oriels, Chaddleworth, Newbury, BERKSHIRE. RG16 0EH) is an example of what might be called SEEN IT, WRITTEN IT & READ IT. A vague FRP fanzine with articles on how to produce scenarios, comments on the editor's own campaign world complete with races, magic and the such like. The zine is rounded off by chit-chat in music and comics.

Should we condemn this zine because it contains nothing new to us? To do so would be a mistake. The material may not be new to us, it may not be as good an exposition on the subject as given in the fanzines of old but then we are old decrepid hacks.

But where do fan writers start? It is very unusual for a new fan to have the talent and personality to write a challenging fanzine without the aid of a writing stick (here RPG). What is old and dull to the hack is new and fresh to the new fan.

TO BE CONTINUED



## THE 'THIRD WORLD ZINE POLL: 1991

It is, of course, impossible to run a truly WORLD ZINE POLL. The vast number of diplomacy zines (there are at least 150 'mainstream' diplomacy zines in the world) and the scarcity of people who see more than one or two 'foreign' zines ensure that such a Poll would have little merit.

However, there is still a good reason for listing my favourite ten zines (as I did in March 1989 and March 1990). I get a number of requests each year from people who want to see 'foreign' zines yet find it difficult to choose particular zines from the wide choice available. By listing my top ten I hope to point people in the right direction, naturally this listing reflects my own interests in the more fannish/diplomacy based zine. In the following a 'X' means the zine didn't qualify and 'F' means the zine had folded and was ineligible.

Next year I hope to present similar lists from a selection of international hobbyists.

Where appropriate I've listed previous finishes in this Poll.

(1) NORTHERN FLAME (4-8) Cal White, 1 Turnberry Avenue, Toronto, Ontario. M6N 1P6 CANADA

Cal White runs a wonderfully laid-back zine which has an immense charm and friendliness. The centre-piece of the zine is the long and rambling letter column. Games are carried outside the main zine giving even more room for reading material. It came as no surprise that this zine won the RUNESTONE POLL in 1990, and is a strong contender for this year's award.

(2) VICTORIANNA (2-7) John Cain, 76 Banool Road, Balwyn, VIC 3101 AUSTRALIA

Victorianna is the best traditional diplomacy zine in the world. If I wanted to run a regular games-services this would be my model. The zine comes out like clock-work, the games are very well GMD and all contain maps. It's the top zine for Australians to play in.

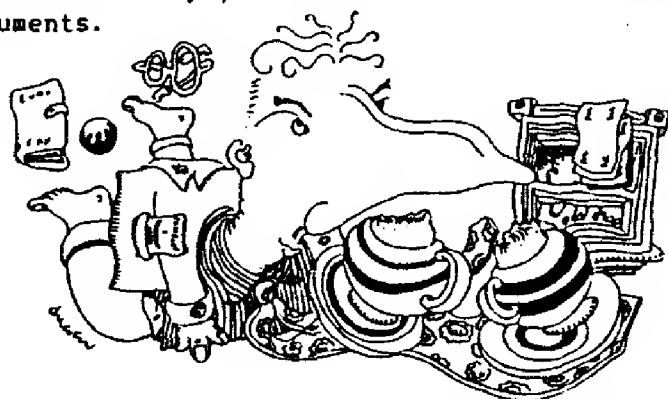
Not only this but the zine contains a good letter-column with contributions from around the world (John is a dedicated internationalist) and the zine carries articles (mainly on the Australian FTF scene) on a regular basis. It combines the twin aims of providing a zine which appeals to gamers as well as to more fannish fans.

(3) ELECTRIC MONK (3-X) Madelain Smith, 44 Ltychett Way, Nythe, SWINDON. SN3 3PN ENGLAND

After finishing second in the 1989 Zine Poll I predicted that it would win the 1990 Poll, which it duly did. I would be surprised if it didn't go on to win the 1991 Poll. On its arrival in 1989 it stood out as the best new zine since the mid 1980's.

The key to its success is simple. Like Victorianna it is a good place to play games. It also runs a good range of non-traditional games. However the reason why I enjoy it is because of the other contents.

It's attractively presented and contains a good selection of book reviews, tales of bike rides, a long letter column and some hobby news. If it has a fault, it is that it is a little 'fluffy'; a little too clean and polite with very little controversy or arguments.



## THE THIRD WORLD ZINE POLL: 1991

(4) DOLCHSTOSS (5-2) Richard Sharp, Norton House, Whielden Street, Amersham, BUCKS. HP7 0HU ENGLAND

Dolchstoss is certainly the best place to play dip in the UK. However it is also very well written. Whilst one may not always agree with Richard's views on a wide range of topics --South Africa, race-relations, Rating Systems-- it is always a delight to read them, and his put-downs in the letter column are inspirational.

Richard is best described as a latent 17th century English Hooligan. Drinking beer and wine, stumbling across Europe overdulging himself and playing bridge against all-comers he also distributes a quanit little journal.

(5) LEPANTO-4-EVER (X-X) Per Westling, Rysdv.246c:16, S-58251. Linkoping, SWEDEN.

Last year I tipped this zine for entry into my top ten and it made it! Perhaps this zine is best decribed as a European Victorianna, certainly there are a number of similiarities between the Scandinavian and Australian hobbies; particularly in their enthusiasm for FTF diplomacy. Per has made a determined effort to establish himself on the International scene and the zine contains contribtors from all around the world, and not suprisingly there is a concentration from mainland Europe.

Perhapes slightly more emphasis on games and fandom rather than the more general chat of, say, Electric Monk Lepanto-4 Ever is yet another Bridge carrying zine. And yes, it is an English-language zine.

(6) VARIANTS & UNCLES (6-4) James Nelson, 112 Huntley Avenue, Spondon, DERBY. DE1 1EU

V&U remains unique amongst my top ten in that it just runs articles on games, and makes no item to debase its noble origins by running other items.

Betraying my background as a diplomay variant fan I include this zine for the simple reason that I still retain an interest in variants and this is simply the best zine in the world for diplomacy variants. New rules, old rules, articles on how to play, reviews of variants and games run to 3-weekly deadlines. Issues are often thematic which enables the editor to look at specific variants in great detail. Recent issues have included an Hypereconomic issue and a look at games which seek to improve the basic game by small changes.

(7) PENGUIN DIP (8-X) Stephen Dorneman, 94 Eastern Ave. #1, Malden, MA02148 USA

I only see this zine irregularly (whenever a third party mails me their copy) but I always look forward to its mixture of SF, role-playing and gaming as it produces an interesting read. The zine is simultaneously an active part of SFoom and the diplomacy hobby and as such contains a cross-section of the best writers from both worlds. Recommended. Indeed I'll sub if Stephen doesn't want to trade....

(8) FTT (X-X) Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Road, Stamford Hill, LONDON N15 6NH

FTT is a 'SF' zine in the best tradition of 'SF' zines, ie it doesn't have any SF except when it creeps in by accident. It comes out three-four times a year.

What distinguishes this zine from the games-based zines which run similiar material is that there are more outside contributors, all of which are of a high standard and consequently it is tough to get your own material into the zine. Of the thirty-seven contributors only ten or so managed to make it past the editing stage. Of these 37 correspondents many are from overseas, adding an international perspective to the discussions.

## THE THIRD WORLD ZINE POLL: 1991

The zine does have a political/economic bent but mixed in with this are comments on history (and how people's views becomes established as the historical truth) along with other topics.

It's challenging material, and the zine is only available to those that want to contribute to it.

(9) Y Ddraig Goch (X-X) Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, YORK. YO3 7JD ENGLAND

Iain has always been an interesting writer, and over the past year he has slowly 'come-out' and given himself the room he needed to develop his writing skills. At the same time he has become more 'open-minded' and although the infamous Bowen sarcasm is still there it is now more effective as it is held back for a more opportune moment.

This has resulted in a more serious letter-column. Combined with a fair dose of hobby-based material (and intelligently discussed at that) Iain runs one of the few UK zines that I would continue to get in the event of a fold.

Although there is some way to go before YDG makes the transition between good zine and great zine I expect to see this happening sometime in the future. It may not win the Zine Poll next year but it is a strong contender for 1992.

(10) GALLIMAUFRY (10-3) Steve Doubleday, Norton House, Whielden Street, Amersham, BUCKS. HP7 0HU. ENGLAND

In some ways Gallimaufry is a British Northern Flame, it is relaxed and low-key; and although the letter-column may not be as wide-ranging there are some good writers. Although the mix of SF, travel tips (and disasters), variant chatter and an increasing amount of hobby news (as Steve and Richard Sharp become more involved in the Hobby in wearing their new hats as BNC) might make for a truly excellent zine I think that at the moment Steve does not make the most of what he has.

The zine seems to have slipped into a steady, passive, state which whilst being perfectly readerable is not as challenging as I suspect Steve could make it. If Steve can find the time to inject more time (and thought) into the zine then Gallimaufry has the potential to go far.

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO LAST YEARS ZINES?

The Canadian zine PASSCHENDALE (f-1-6), folded soon after I announced my results! I hope this isn't a reoccurring feature of the Poll! Of all the zines I have seen in my time in the hobby this was simply the best, it stands out head and shoulders over the rest and await Francois' return. Not only was Francois the top North American writer (on diplomacy, hobby matters and current affairs; a rare combination) but he was also the editor I've seen. A truly talented individual.

The American zine HOUSE of LORDS (f-7-9) folded prior to my 1990 results and the gap it left in the American Hobby has yet to be filled. Dick & Julie Martin are still around in the hobby.

Finally, I might have remarked that SHIPYARD BLUES (X-9-X) was a regular SF zine, but I don't think I've seen it since I wrote my column this time last year!

## THE THIRD WORLD ZINE POLL: 1991

Of those zines I tipped for entry last year, the Belgian zine DIPSOMANIA remains too irregular for inclusion and as it runs more games the written content has shrunk dramatically; I don't expect it to survive much longer. The American zine BEEN THERE, DONE THAT seems to have had an off-year, and the switch from Air Mail to Surface Mail delivery has not been a step in the right-direction. Tom Nash is probably the biggest cheap-skate in the world!

### NEXT YEARS ZINES

Zines to look out for next year include Been There Done That if Tom can produce it on a regular basis. David Hood's revamped DIPLOMACY WORLD has an outside chance to scrape in if he can make the zine more lively and varied in content. The German Europa 2000 has a chance with its wide range of letter-writers, although it may be too game-heavy to impress me that much.

Finally Harry Bond's U-BEND has a glittering future provided it can be produced on a regular basis. Since he has to face finals and the transition from student to full-time work this remains to be seen, but the potential is there. Hopefully he'll set up some international trades...

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GAMES IN PROGRESS The Mouth of Sauron currently runs: Diplomacy (2), International Diplomacy (2), Round Robin Gunboat (vt-2), Gunboat (vt-1), Everybody Plays (vt-2), Coorbop Downfall (vt-1), Intimate Dip 1a (vt-1), International Hardbop Downfall (vt-1), International Minimalist Dip (vt-1) & Railway Rivals (1).

### WAITING LISTS

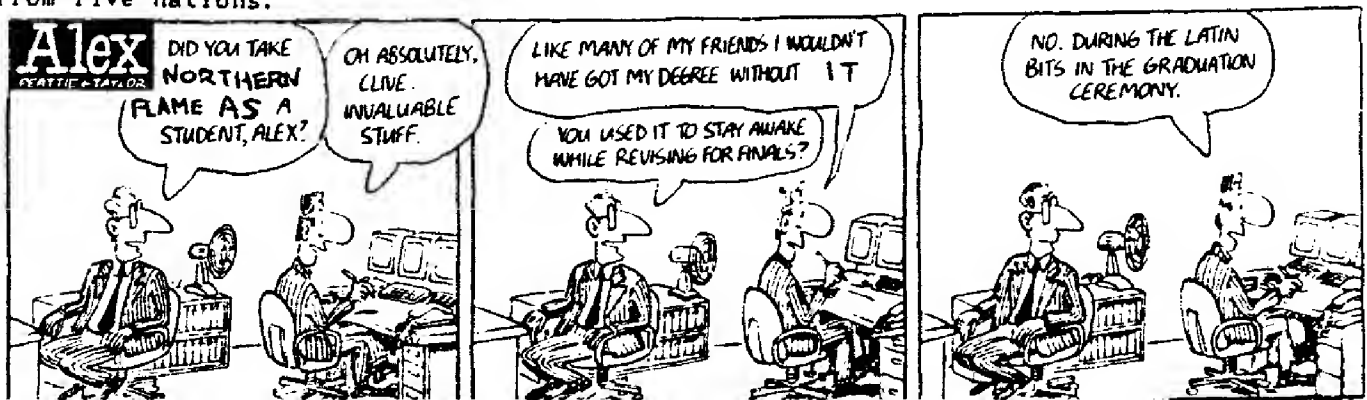
(1) INVITATIONAL DIPLOMACY (?). GM: Mark Nelson. Players are: A-John Wilman, E-Ian Harris, F-Stuart Eves, G-James Nelson, I-Mark Malone, R-Andy Bell & T-John Breakwell. Does anyone object to playing Abstraction II instead? This game will start in July.

(2) DEFINITIVE VAIN RATS (Mark Firth Rules) GM: Mark Firth. Players: Barry Conlin, Ian Harris, Mark Malone, Robin Tew, Guy Thomas, Melinda Holley (?), Mark Nelson (?). GAMESTART after Firth's finals.

(3) HARDBOP DOWNFALL GM: James Nelson. Players: Dr John Dods, Rob Douglas, Tom Howell, Mark Malone, Mark Nelson, Robin Tew & John Wilman. GAMESTART when James gets off his butt.

(4) REVISED HARDBOP DOWNFALL GM: ?? A revised set of rules will be produced over the Summer. This game should start end 1991. Players: Mark Malone (?), Mark Nelson (??), Rob Douglas (???)

(5) For the immediate future new waiting lists depends on finding outside GMs willing to run games as neither of the present GMs have any spare capacity. I'd like a few international variant games if possible, possible combining players from NORTHERN FLAME, A VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE It should be relatively to run some five player games with players from five nations.



## WORLD ZINE POLL 1991

In each of the last two years my brother listed his top ten zines from the UK and overseas. Of course, an actual World Zine Poll is a silly idea because few people see international zines, and of those who do few see many. This year Mark invited me to list my own 'Top Ten'. Therefore, in reverse order...

10. **ODE**: John Marsden, 33 Weston Rd, Strood, Kent, ME2 3HA. A zine you can depend upon as John has been publishing for over ten years without fail. One of the few zines I'd consider playing in as John and his outside GMs are all excellent. John doesn't write articles for ODE but prints contributions when sent. John occasionally slips in a controversial comment in the hope that it'll spark a response. My only criticism is the letter column expands and contracts rapidly, a fault which lies at the door of the readership and not John's.

9. **ISSUE**: Jeremy Nuttall, 24 Eastwood Rd, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 9NB. There's a name which may ring a bell to a few readers. Jeremy was once the big name in role-playing fandom and was on the fringe of the Diplomacy hobby. But the zine has connections with neither hobbies. Instead it is a zine edited by Jeremy covering Christian perspectives on current issues. A lively debate within his letter column from both Christians and non-Christians give the zine a real tingle as Jeremy opens up the issues for discussion. The issues are discussed intelligently and maturely and provide an excellent alternative view on current issues.

8. **ELECTRIC MONK**: Madelaine Smith, 44 Lytchett Way, Nythe, Swindon, SN3 3PN. EM came 2nd in the Zine Poll last year, won it this year, and will probably win it next year. If that is not testimony enough to the quality of the product then I'm lost for words. Part of the 'fluffy' tendency of zines which sprung up in the last couple of years Madelaine and co-editor Andy Key cover everything from Teddy bears to bike trips, and frequently bike trips with teddy bears! The quality of writing and production are both superb and the zine is rounded off with an vibrant letter column. My own regret is that I haven't got the time to contribute!

7. **LEPANTO 4 EVER**: Per Westling, Rydsv, 246c:16, S-53251 Linköping, SWEDEN. Many people get put off by the thought of a zine in a, Shock! Horror! Foreign language! , but Per writes in English so this does not apply. He writes intelligently on all subjects and prints articles on not just Diplomacy and its variants but also on current affairs and bridge. He runs a wide range of games and international participation is high in both games and contributions. Certainly the best non-British european zine.

6. **VICTORIANA**: John Cain, 76 Bancroft Rd, Balwyn, 3103, AUSTRALIA. Having been lucky enough to meet John not once, but twice, I can testify that John is a very nice man (even perhaps, a very, very nice man, as the RAC advert goes...). Whatsmore, this comes across in the zine. There are three main features to the zine. A long lettercolumn on a wide range of subject with correspondants spanning the globe. Coverage of the Australia conventions, and the games, many of which are international games. A less serious and more frivolous zine than many, it will always be a favourite of mine.

5. **THE CANADIAN DIPLOMAT**: Robert Acheson, #603, 10883 Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton, Alberta T6E 4S6, CANADA. Robert only manages to produce this four times a year but I still eagerly await the next issue. Robert runs many games but the zine is made by the space filling in between the reports. Robert reprint cartoons, quotes and small humours articles to fill in the gaps. These frequently leave me in stitches. Whatsmore a fairly substantial letter column fleshes out the zine - I call it a letter column but there isn't much comment on previous letters (because of the time lag) but more a collection of peoples thoughts on comment events - mostly sport and politics.

4. **DOLCESTOB**: Richard Sharp, Norton House, Whielden St, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0HU. With the exception of ISSUE the only zine I subscribe to in the top ten, and one of

the two zines I'd subscribe to if I semi-dropped out of the hobby. Why? Richard is perhaps the best writer in the hobby. He writes about his life, the bridge he plays, the beer he drinks, the food he eats. In short, nothing of any great intellectual weight but nevertheless a damn good ~~cup of coffee~~ read. His politics are controversial (the right wing of the political spectrum), his manner provocative, his put downs a sight to see. A large and healthy letter column provides Richard with a vehicle to comment, in his own inimitable style, on every matter under the sun. The faint-hearted and easily offended need not subscribe but I urge everyone else to do so.

3. **Y DDRAIG GOCH:** Iain Bowen, 5 Wigginton Terrace, York, YO3 7JD. YDG is the other zine I'd subscribe to if I semi-dropped out of the hobby. Its similarity with DOLCHSTOS does not end there. Once again Iain has a controversial manner about him and has no qualms in printing controversial subject matter. A wonderfully acidly sarcastic writing style, and a profound knowledge on most subjects intellectual, makes Iain one of the best writers in the hobby. The zine has come on in leaps and bounds since the early days (How much for a copy of Issue 1 shall I start the bidding at?) and Iain has carved a niche for himself within the Diplomacy hobby as the Walkerdine in waiting.

2. **THE YORKSHIRE GALLANT:** Mark Nelson, 21 Cecil Mount, Armley, Leeds, LS12 2AP. My dear brother changes the name of the zine so often that I have lost track of its current title. TYG/whatever is produced whenever Mark feels he has sufficient material to put in an issue. This consequently means you receive five or so excellent issues instead of ten mediocre issues a year. My brother has developed immensely as a writer and now writes intelligently (where previously he had not...honest!) on a wide range of matters - Science Fiction, comics, bridge, Diplomacy, books, etc. Even Iain Bowen has said that it would be "one of the few zines I'd subscribe to if I folded YDG". How much better a recommendation can you receive? An excellent zine even if Mark beat me in the Zine Poll (but only because he got his American cronies to vote 10 for him!) - as a brother I should be putting him down rather than praising him!

1. **NORTHERN FLAME:** Cal White, 1 Turnberry Ave, Toronto, Ontario M6N 1PG, CANADA. Cal won the Runestone Poll last year (the US zine poll) and looks a likely winner next year. The zine is consistently produced to an excellent standard. The main feature is the letter column which features a wide range of subjects from a wide variety of people - Americans, Brits, Ozzies, Canadians, etc. Cal also likes reader participation in other forms - he runs Question of Scruples type questions and invites responses, and he runs reader participation games with a narrative approach. I can recommend no other zine above this because the product is just superb.



## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES

In MATRIX 92 (March 1991) Jenny Glover compares the art of editing to that of conducting an orchestra, pointing out that whilst an editor should be able to write any column it is bad practise to do so; it is better to find the appropriate specialists and to direct their activities.

An interesting analogy, which is more appropriate for professional magazines, and those fanzines which aspire to that standard, rather than the traditional fanzine. But I think that there is a music analogy for more humble fanzines. Instead of a conductor directing an orchestra, pulling together the different aims of many players, the editor (or more accurately in the fanzine field the publisher) is a composer deciding on the content and tone of his composition (the fanzine).

And this analogy explains why it is often wrong to view an issue of a fanzine in isolation (as SF often reviewers do) rather than looking at them in the context of their past and of the fandom surrounding them. Just as composers progress and increase their command of compositional skills, so do fanzine publishers. Publishers have a past and are influenced by their social (fannish) surroundings.

In the same issue of Matrix we find the following complaint directed against the apathetic mass of the BSFA membership, in Bruce Geryk like strident tones.

*" You may be content to read the magazines and spend an evening on them every two months, toying with the competition, but leaving it for something more interesting. That's a valid position. Science Fiction may not be a top priority in your life. You may just once decide to be more adventurous. It's a bit scary, to change your habits can make you feel vulnerable. But it can make you feel good. Why not try it?"*

In MOIRE 12 (August 1990) ol'e timer Terry Tailman puts forward a different perspective on fannish activity, this time on people who dote things more seriously...

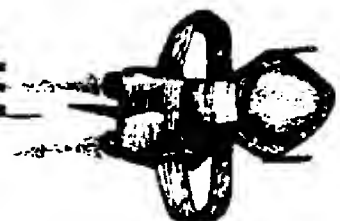
*" Anyone, then or now, who does so (i.e. takes themselves or the hobby seriously), gets what they need and deserve -- ABUSE!!! Death to feud whimps, pollsters (the serious ones), and alternate Custodians. Roll their szines tightly, insert analiv and light with a torch (pant, pant, pant...sorry, the thought of serious/arrogant/prig hobbyists cranks with up.)"*

Whilst both sides have points, and over-state their respective cases, I incline more to the Tailman view. Indeed it seems rather arrogant to lambast your readership in such a way as to tell them that they are uninteresting mundanes who should be leading a full and active fannish life.

I don't actually trade with MOIRE (perhapes I should) but Iain Bowen recently gave me a selection of back-issues and I was impressed by what I saw. Although it follows the increasing trend for American zines to be be sloooow (and this one is game-heavy), it makes up for this with selection of interesting letters and spread of articles (normally one an issue) on a variety of topics.

The letter column has had coverage on Media Programs, the inevitable Twin Peaks, ST:TNG and Quatum Leap, music and general fannishness (including SF fen responsible for fannish religions). I have to confess that althought Quantum Leap was junk, I watched all the episodes, missing only the first ten minuites of the first show (probably the best ten minuites of the whole series...). As Channel Four has just started repeating Time Tunnel (on Thursday evening at six) it's fun comparing the success of the two different appraoches to a time-travel series.

**FLY FANDOM ANYWHERE**



## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (2)

Why is the more parochial Quantum Leap, events set only in the last thirty years and always in the States, a success, second series in the bag, whilst Time Tunnel, events set anytime and anyplace, failed dismally, only having the one series? But as always in these cases the answer is distressingly simple. Quantum Leap was a commercial success because of its very narrowness. Not only is there the ever-popular appeal of nostalgia but the program is not too taxing and demanding of an education in such difficult concepts as history.

The episode of Quantum Leap that springs to mind, and one I particularly enjoyed, was the 'detective' story when the plot is based around a book the time-travellers have read, not realising that it was based on actual events: can they solve the crime nobody else did? (Ah, this plot also seems to be rather similiar to one used in a ST:TNG first series episode).

Another thing I've enjoyed in recent issues of Moire as been an examination of people's perceptions of recent hobby history. Tim asked readers to explain the reason behind recent-ish feuds and their outcomes. It's remarkable how fuzzy memories can be, and how novices perceptions of events are coloured by the coverage in their 'parent' zine.

Of course Moore is lacking in common sense, running perhaps the only game more pointless than Grand Empires... postal Britannia. Is there no hope for a sane, reasonable American editor.

The last few issues of MOIRE have seen the gradual reappearance of the legendary Terry Tallman on the scene, I quoted him above. In view of Larry Perry's recent return to activity (see the lettercolumn) and Larry's rather controversial place in the American Hobby I thought I'd give another view from Tallman...

*" The Diptax was Larry Peery 'Organizing' again. Larry, an otherwise nice person, sits down every couple of years and thinks up a way to help/straighten out/promote/totally piss off the postal dip hobby. I have a longer Peery organizing story, maybe someother time."*

Of course there's always going to be one spoil-sport who objects to people discussing hobby history. Someone who can't take the pressure, a full-time professional feud-wimp (and his procrastinations otherwise are not convincing)...Tom Nash hang your head in shame!

Having mentioned that wimp Nash I suppose I'd better mention his Been There, Done That, an irregular publication containing lashing and lashing of letters and loads of games.

One thing which which stand out from a random survey of American zines is that American fans seem to be more liberal than the more conservative impression of the American public created by the media. Only in the pages of Electronic Protocol have I seen what might be called unrepentent patriotism, the letters in ETD (amongst other zines) being more reflective.

In the lettercolumn Eric Brosius (Runestone Poll Custodian) illustrates one of the differences between the UK and US hobbies. In the UK there has been a trend since the early 1970's for people to play in fewer and fewer games. I compiled the following figures for UK games:



## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (3)

### Number of players in 'n' games, by groups

	50+	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	3-9	2	1	Total	Avg/player
WW4 (19-11-73):	1	2	3	5	11	78	37	125	262	4.05
WW7 (1-12-74):	1	1	3	5	25	121	77	172	405	3.79
WW9 (29-12-75):	---	---	---	3	13	145	91	213	465	2.88
WW11(31-12-76):	---	---	---	2	22	169	103	210	506	2.96
WW12(15-10-77):	---	---	---	4	21	175	87	228	525	2.94
WW13(30-11-79):	---	---	---	1	20	173	127	270	591	2.70
FL1 (05-85):	---	---	---	1	7	182	181	458	829	2.03
FL3 (08-89):	---	---	---	1	15	168	154	435	773	2.16

WW=Who's Where, a Mick Bullock  
stat-zine.

FL=The Fat Lady Sings. £1 by Geoff Challinger and £3 by Jan Niechwiadowiz.

(It isn't clear if Mick's or Geoff's stats incorporated variant games but Jan's did.)

From Eric's comments it seems that in the States there are a significant number of multi-game players, although there have been no figures produced. However this might be a reflection on people taking up standby positions rather than original positions (indeed I have noticed a tendency for the same players to act as standbys). Why do I mention this? Well Eric contends that this phenomena of multi-game players effects style-of-play and changes how endgame strategies.

Certainly Eric puts forward a convincing view. Players either NMR out or concede 'cheapo draws', preferring to conserve their energy for other games rather than fighting it out. Eric then goes on to suggest a blacklist of players who NMR out of games whilst signing up for new ones.

I'm not getting involved in that argument, the comments on many multi-player games effecting game strategies are more interesting in the light of UK experience.

As shown above in the UK there has been a steady-drop in the average games/player and there has also been a steady increase in the percentage of games finishing in a draw (figures produced by Richard Walkerdine some years ago show this well), yet Eric is suggesting that in the States the multi-player phenomena may be accounting for an increase in games finishing as a draw.

However, there may be other reasons for the decrease in the number of UK games resulting in a win. It has been suggested on more than one occasion that the standard of play has steadily increased and that players are accordingly more aware of stalemate lines thesedays, resulting in alliances being formed earlier in the game with the aim of preventing a wins; play has become more conservative. I'm not convinced by this argument since those players who remain in the hobby tend to play in even fewer games than the average. Also, as there are not so many zines running diplomacy articles thesedays I am not convinced that the new novice has a higher standard of play.

Another view put forward in Ode a few years ago was that the change in results was predominately due to the slowing down in zine frequency. With a change from the predominantly three weekly zines of the early 1970's through to the five-weekly of the early 1980's and now six-weekly, it takes even longer to play a game. Given a choice of playing for a win in four or five game-years (which may well be a year, or more, real time) players are happier to settle for a draw and a new game.

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (4)

Finally it strikes me that the decrease in the percentage of games finishing in a draw has coincided with a reduction in the use of standbys from being almost universal to almost no use. Again this is, perhaps, opposite to one's initial thoughts.

As well as being an interesting (if slow) zine BTD serves a useful role as a vehicle for cross-pollination between pbmers (play-by-mailers) and email (electronic mail) fans. Tom has been responsible for many email players crossing over into the sedate world of pbm play. One continuing line of discussion is the supposed distaste expressed by many 'important' pbmers for email play (names being named are Larry Peery, David Hood & Mark Lew).

Despite popular opinion to the contrary I do not see many American zines and I admit to missing this argument. In fact I can't believe that any serious pbmer would condemn email play as email is clearer the way forward to better games. Of course email isn't perfect, it isn't suitable for everyone and current email practises need to be changed if it is going to increase its appeal away from the student/single no-hopers who currently dominate it.

Both forms of play appeal to people. I see no reason why the two separate ways can't be united. Indeed if the pbm hobby can't integrate itself with the email hobby (especially socially) then the pbm hobby has a very limited future.

Typical of the bitchy comments being made is a remark by email fan Vince Leamons who comments that " ...it's obvious why people and arguments like Robert Sacks vs Everybody exist: feuds and hobby-wide arguments are the only things interesting enough to keep people involved."

Another slow zine, this time Canadian and with the games carried separately to the main zine, is Bruce McIntyre's Excelsior. (If you want me to loc the zine Bruce you need to stop being a cheapskate and start sending James and myself separate copies! I expect my own copy, after all we both trade with you). Issue 38 (November 1990) contains a mixture of rules, letters and backgammon. In the letter pages we have the sad sight of David Hood trying to down-grade football (or Soccer to the illiterates).

*"I fail to understand the excitement over a game that is so incredibly boring to watch. Fun to play, but terrible to watch...As far as Soccer goes, the "action" is repetitive and non-stop. No time to digest or analyse what's going on, and almost no soring to get excited about."*

I have to admit that I am not a big Football fan, watching the occasional big game and most of England's pitiful attempts at international games. To be frank, the game against Turkey was a disgrace. Not only did we only score once, but in the part of the game I watched (first 30 minutes of the second-half) we only had three scoring opportunities and of those only one shot on goal resulted. Indeed the Turks played a far better game, more attractive football and deserved to score a goal.

If this is the best England can manage then there is little hope for us. Whilst the past ten-twenty years has seen a large improvement in the standard of the 'little' footballing nations, there are few easy wins to be had these days; if we are to be classed as a footballing nation we must be able to play better not only against such small fry as Turkey but when one or two players are missing.

Still, David explains why Americans don't like Soccer, it's too challenging. The action is "non-stop" and there is no time to work out what's happening. Perhaps a one-minute gap every ten minutes would allow him to work out what has happened in the last five minutes? Additionally watching TV and using your brain is too difficult for the average American who need all of their brain cells to watch

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (5)

David probably had the misfortune to watch the World Cup. I watched most of the games and was disappointed by almost all of them. I think the World Cup format needs to be change, so that teams don't play for a penalty shoot-out. There were few good open games, Holland vs West Germany springs to mind. At least justice was done when the best nation in the Finals won.

View from Another Shore 8 contains a report of NewZealand DipCon 1, an abject and dismal failure. Ran in conjunction with a general convention, the diplomacy tournament had the grand total of one game! Almost all of New Zealand postal players failed to turn up for reason or another, mainly because the con clashed with the middle of finals which shows poor planning by somebody; most New Zealand players are students.

Luckily Dr John Dods was not disturbed, and is marching onto bigger and better conventions, this time with some kind of thinking involved. Does John like Soccer? However the Con was not a failure, and the idea to run a FTF version of "Sea of Despair" was inspired. Perhaps we could see something similar at ManorCon?

In this game everyone has 20 Hit Points. Each round you either (a) repair upto 5 of your Hit Points or (b) Vote 5 points of one player (or any combination) (if you NMR you cast five points to kill yourself). When you go onto negative hits you're out of the game. A rather silly game, but one which should be good fun at a small convention...especially just prior to an Awards Ceremony when convention attendees have grudges to pay off. The first three eliminees and the winner were awarded prized.

Coming nearer to home we reach Europa 2000. Being German this has a large and healthy emphasis on German games. There are waiting lists for Schoko & Co (GM Stuart Dagger), United, Goidon Strider (Alan Parr), Metropolis, Super-G and Tennis. English language rules are available for most of these games.

As well as a spread of games the zine has a healthy list of international readers, which is reflected in the occasional letter-column (no point having them unless they're going to do something useful). Recent writers come from England, Germany, Sweden and the States.

There is certainly room for a general games zine of this sort in the UK, and imagine that it would have considerable appeal. If I were thinking of starting up new zine I'd go for one like Europa 2000.

Y Ddraig Goch has become the home for attacks on all Soft Shandy-Drinking Southerners, in particular the miserable Steve Howe who in £52 (January 1991) had the audacity to say that Gazza couldn't even speak English! In an attempt to eradicate all regional accents we have been officially encouraged to use the measured and dulcet tones that Steve uses, buy the man a drink at ManorCon and get a free elocution lesson! Is Steve a Soccer fan, I think we should be told.

Iain has just produced the first issue of his new "BOOKS APA" (Iain's trying to think of a better title); although we are still awaiting in the Zine Poll Zine...an almost Piggottesque delay here.

But back to the APA. Contributions appear from Mike Siggins, Iain Bowen, Brian Hauton, Paul Norris, James Nelson (lowering the tone of the APA) and Steve Howe. Most of the contributions are single sheets with the authors awaiting comments by other contributors to jump upon. There's room for a total of 15 contributors, who are expected to contribute at least one page every other mailing. It's all rather informal and hopefully Iain will keep out the pretensions and cliqueness found in many APAs. Worth a contribution

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (6)

Last issue I reviewed Jeremy'd Nuttall religious discussion zine Issue. Jeremy also runs a postal supplement, The VictoryPoint Gazette. Given Jeremy's background it is not suprising that it contains a large postal FRP game (rulesless and narrative) with one diplomacy game trundling along. However Nuttall's warped mind has conceived the idea of Postal Topple and wants me to plug it! Just how this is going to work is perfectly clear, badly. Just how you can seriously suggest playing a serious game of Postal Topple is beyond me. Even Finchley Topple has little point.

How does fanzine reviewing work? Normally editors review zines in their own fanzine, and not suprisingly they normally review the small selection of zines that they like; for instance John Marsden wouldn't be seen dead reviewing personal zines! Typically reviewers have a selection of zines that they follow religiously, sometimes spicing things up with a review of a new zine (at least this was the case in the old days when there were such things as new zines); although these reviews often fit into the same pattern as the established and familiar zines.

So in order to see a wide selection of zines being reviewed it is normally necessary to see a wide selection of zines, or alternatively get those Zines which just review other zines. Finally we turn full circle with reviewer of those zines that that review zines...

But how narrow minded are the reviewers? In a review of FACTSHEET FIVE Jenny Glover comments "I remain astonished at the variety of American fanzines and totally confussed as to the state of American Pyschology that they reveal"

Many fans tend to be narrow minded. Not only do they know what they like (but more importantly) they know where they want it from. Zines that do not coming from 'the right area' are dismissed out-of-hand, actually even that isn't true as your average fan doesn't want to know about zines that do not come with an approved pedigree.

Dolchstoss, NMR!, Electric Monk are all zines with a appeal wider than just to those who play games in them. Take away the games and those readers would not only still enjoy the zine but they'd think it was an improvemet. So why don't they look at zines which come from a nongaming background?

It is certainly easier to be a multi-fandom fan than to run a multi-fandom zine, as you then criticised in mutli-fandoms! A zine which straddles boundaries is John Breakwell's Green Goblin. My admiration of this zine stems from the path it has taken through the years as John's interest change. The zine may have originally been solidly in roleplaying fandom, but since then ther has been a bash at postal games, contacts have been established with the odd SF zine and John has even shown an interest in Media Fandom and comics!

The potpourri of books, roleplaying, comics, computers & chat is not unusual. However Green Goblin stand out because along its travels it has collected a range of fans from different fandoms and different backgrounds. This is reflected in the letter-column, although you could do with editing some of the comments John!

Janet Ellicott's ADZINE is a listing zine for media zines. How interesting are back-issues? To some extent that depends what you want in zines. I find back issues of diplomay zines interesting because I'm inteested in hobby history, but many people find these uninteresting, because it isn't possible to contribute to folded zines and wwo reads a fanzine in isolation? Of course the back-issues of some zines do have appeal, for example those which carry diplomacy articles. If you're a media zines then you're interested in the p

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (7)

Typically, media zines cover such things as Dr Who, ST, ST:TNG, Blake's Seven, Sapphire and Steel...virtually any 'cult' TV Show. Not suprisingly there are now media zines on Twin Peaks.

Content is typically things such as interviews, fiction, news on the shows, trivia, conventions and the such like.

Janet lists a wide range of different zines, gives their contents and details on the availability of back-issues. There are no critical reviews, but if you're looking for material on one show you quickly find out what's available.

One media zine which I've picked up in Leeds is the imaginative named Next Generation News. Whilst I am not really a media Fan I give support to locally-produced fanzines. ST:TNG has the advantage over many media programs in that it is still running, so there is always something new to talk about; even if it is moaning at how far we're behind the States.

I can't admit to being a dedicated fan, Wednesday at 6.00pm is not the best time for the show and I'm not always home then (and I don't have a video). My gut feeling is that the show would have a large appeal to adults, so the timing schedule is strange. There are a number of things I like about the show, although the attempts at continuity between programmes is ruined by the BBC showing them out-of-order.

Contents of NGN are fairly standard. Reviews of episodes, news from the State, an interview with John de Lancie (who plays the maverick Q), reviews of different characters, details of video and other promotions. I particularly liked the section giving details of where the ST: TNG team act during the off-season. On the basis of this issue it would appear that media fans are more interest in the straight 'goods' rather than fannish chattle, but we shall see.

The last issue of Mission From God came out some time ago, a sad-looking and tired review zine. The past few issues have not had the life of the earlier issues, as Iain has produced an ever increasing percentge of the zine.

It has also been interesting to note the changing style of the zine as Iain moved from the firey young-radical to the establishment-hack of today. Indeed Pete Sullivan and Iain are rapidly becoming the establishment.

MFG broke the tradition of British Diplomacy review zines, away from the sterile approach of earlier zines, typified in 20Y0, and injected a much needed live into the subject. The MFG approach didn't always work, the early issues tried too hard too shock and comment at the expense of informing.

A reviews zine should consider personalities involved in the hobby, but there is a thin line between informative banter and obscure cliquey jokes. By moving away from a dry account of individual issues MFG managed to comment on the hobby in an informative and sometimes amusing way.

The new editors, the fluffy Andy Key and fluffier Madelaine Smith bring their first issue out for ManorCon. Will the zines hard hitting tabloid style be replaced by a kinder, gentler zine? We await the answer.

ADZINE Janet Ellicott, 43 Brooksbank House, Retreat Place, Morning Lane, Hackney, LONDON. E9 6N (two pounds an issue in the UK, three pounds outside)

BTDT Tom Nash, 202 Settler's Road, St. Simon's Island, GA 31522. USA

Europa 2000 J.Georg Broniarz-Frynas, Bahnhofstr.42, D-4980 Bunde, GERMANY.

## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FANZINES (8)

Excelsior Bruce McIntyre, 6636 Dow Ave. E203 Burnaby, B.C. CANADA. V5H 3C9

GREEN GOBLIN John Breakwell,

MOIRE Tim Moore, 405 Fair Drive E101. Costa Mesa. CA 92626-6215. USA

Next Generation News 5 Coteffields Avenue. Farsley. Pudsey. WEST YORKS. LS28 5EJ  
(Pound an issue)

The VictoryPoint Gazette Jeremy Nuttall. 24 Eastwood Road. Balsall Heath. BIRMINGHAM.  
B12 9NBa

IAIN BOWEN. 5 Wigginton Terrace. YORK. YO3 7JD

Written to John Coltrane's "More Lasting Than Bronze" double LP. the majestic mainstream of "Duke Ellington meets Coleman Hawkins" (one of the best 'team-ups' in the history of Jazz) & Woody Herman's late 1960's LPs "Light My Fire. Heavy Exposure & Woody".

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### A CUNNING SPACEFILLER

After many years of waiting in the wings, young Harry Bond has finally produced the first issue of a gameszine. Forsaking the pleasures of being a BNF in SF he has rapidly established a reputation as a letter-racker in the diplomacy hobby by the simple expedient of sending letters to anyone desperate enough to print them.

However Up Around The Bend is not a shoddy little production from someone entering publishing on the sly and for the wrong reasons. It is a shoddy little production from someone entering publishing with a large exclamation and, perhaps, for the right reasons.

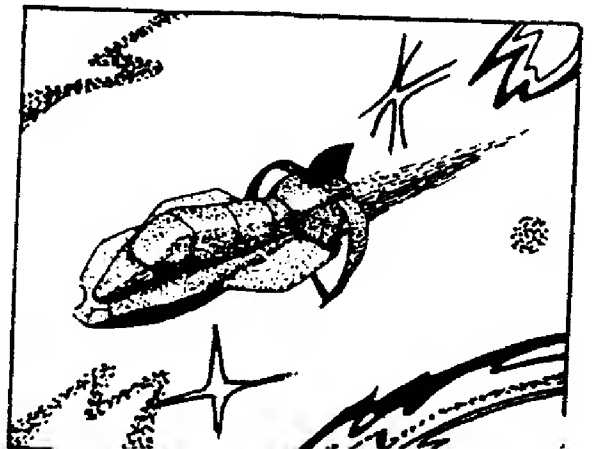
Despite suffering from first issue sickness (house rules, rules for games, lists of games Harry wants to run) the first issue shows promise, and in a few places class. Harry puts his previous experience as a fanzine producer to good effect. It's attention to little details, casual comments which differentiate between the good and the poor one.

The zine reminds me of the zines of ten or so years ago in the mix of games-talk and general chatter, and certainly young Harry has enough to talk about. This is going to be a zine to read and a zine offering a games service. Of current zines I think the closest comparison will be to A Step Further Out.

HARRY BOND. 6 Wolsey Avenue. Walthamstow. LONDON E17 6RE

### A SPACE(FILLER)

## TRAVEL THROUGH ( )



**TERMINATOR**  
**BY DARK HORSE COMICS**

I don't buy many comics and I tend to prefer mini-series rather than their open-ended cousins. Although there are some excellent open-ended comics (Hellblazer, Swamp Thing for example) which use the plotting advantages granted by this format, many do not. Mini-series seem to concentrate the writers and artists mind to produce a higher quality product...in terms of story, art and general production values.

Also, you don't get hooked into comic addiction buying mini-series. You know when a particular series finishes I don't HAVE to buy another, I can handle it...

Dark Horse seem to have made something of a speciality in producing comics which tie into major films. As well as Terminator there have been Predator (two volumes), Aliens (three volumes), the inevitable Aliens vs Predator (one volume) and now an Indiana Jones comic. Initially I did not pay any attention to Dark Horse, in the past I have found that comics that tie with films to be very poor; nearly rehashing the film in comic form and too often with poor production. Hence when I actually looked at Aliens I was very surprised as it is an excellent mini-series which does not follow the scripts of the film but is entirely independent. At God-Con One Steve Weeks recommended a number of comics including Terminator, a four issue mini-series printed between August-November 1990. Since I have just completed the set I thought I'd give it a review.

You don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the comic, although it helps understand some small parts of the plot, and anyone who enjoyed the film should enjoy the comic.

How would you have written the Terminator mini-series? It may seem to be difficult since the film did not include any obvious loose-ends to tidy up but the film does suggest a number of possible scenarios.

We know the present and what the future holds so one possible approach would be to show how Skynet came into existence and attempts to destroy humanity. Another approach would be to set a comic in the war-torn world of the future showing 'our' struggle for existence against the networks. Finally, why not cover the events leading up to the start of the film? The only problem with this final approach is that to some extent it would be difficult to maintain tension and interest in the comic since we already know what the ending would be.

Anyway, John Arcudi (Terminator writer) does not follow any of these approaches in Terminator Volume 1 (a second series being promised for 1991) but instead produces a story-line that is a slight parody of the Film.

One of the things I particularly liked about the film were the glimpses of the future world and the comic continues in this vein. The action starts in the future and then switches to the 'present'.

The networks attempt to eliminate the human race starts in 2009 but by 2029 man appears to have secured its future. (Incidentally I do not really understand just why the War takes 20 years to come to a conclusion, probably a particularly nasty conclusion; any suggestions?) Three months after the attack by Recon Security which destroyed Skynet's master-control the remaining human forces are gradually moping up the remaining network complexes.

## "TERMINATOR VOLUME ONE"

As we know from the film, the attack on the master-complex results in the discovery of a prototype time displacement chamber and leads into the events of the film. Now, another network has designed a time-machine but this time a squad of five humans go back in time whilst three terminators are sent back to 'secure the future'.

The object of the humans mission is Dr Hollister, an expert in microelectronics, whose defense work on Project Bellerophon for Cyberdyne Systems will lead to the perfection of artificial intelligence in the early 1990's, which the military will use to control all nuclear warheads...As Judge Death might say "Human life is itself the only thing endangering human life." By eliminating Hollister the human team hope to prevent this breakthrough and the resulting run-away sequence of events that leads to their future.

When this is explained to Hollister's assistant, Dr Austin, it comes as something of suprise to him as the project is moving very slowly with no sign of a breakthrough at 'present' (1989). An explanation suggested in the comic is a standard kind of time-paradox, seemingly the leap in AI theory only occurs because Hollister has access to a AI unit from the future (the remains of the Terminator from the film). Although the Dark Horse team push this explanation quite strongly throughout the comic they leave doubt as to whether this explanation is correct.

Whilst this explanation does explain the quantum-leap in AI design, I find it unsatisfactory since it involves invoking a time-paradox. Another thorny-problem was posed in the letter column of Issue Four.

The human party went back in time at a set time in 2029 and some-time latter the Terminators depart after them, arriving at the same time as the humans do. Now if the human-mission was successful then time is altered and so the Terminators don't exist to go back into the past to prevent their mission; yet they do so, so what is the explanation?

In response Diana Schutz (Terminator editor) suggests that the human mission was not a complete success and so didn't substantially alter time. Whilst this explanation is OK it doesn't help us resolve the problems outlined above. Now, my own explanation...

Let us assume that the humans go back into time and kill Hollister. However this doesn't change anything because it's impossible to change the large-scale structure of time, either it wasn't Hollister who made the breakthrough or if it was then somebody else makes the break through and events are set back into their 'proper' course. Hence 'large-scale' time isn't altered and so the Terminators go after them. In short it's possible to change the small details but not the large ones. Although YOU can have a great time pointing out all the paradoxes involved with this scheme, please don't write to me and tell me!

The simple explanation that going back in time can't substantially change the future, only the route by which it happens, has the great advantage that many headache causing problems are done away with. Please do not give me any new-ones!!!

OK, so what do I like about the comic? Well I liked the future outlined in the film and any additional material covering that is welcomed. Oops, that's liked from a SF point-of-view and NOT want-to-see like! The dialogue is good, even witty in places with a nice collection of one-liners and 'unintended' jokes.



## "TERMINATOR VOLUME ONE"

There is attention to detail, little panels which make more sense when read in the knowledge of the complete mini-series: OK so many comics do that nowadays but it's still a sign of thought going into the comic. Whilst there is violence it isn't glorified and occurs naturally within the context of the story. As well as 'verbal' humour there are also nice touches in the artwork, I particularly liked the sniffer 'Robotic dog' in Issue One and the reaction it gets from the army-unit.

Apart from the headaches that go with time-travel paradoxes I have very little criticism of the comic. In Issue 4, Page 9, it seems strange that the good guys leave behind their one advanced weapon when they make their get-away. A lapse of concentration, but from battle-hardened soldiers? I am not too convinced by the explanation of events towards the end of issue Four (which I can't tell about without giving too much away...you'll just have to read the comic to find out). It seems too 'unlikely' and too convenient unless the Terminator team are playing a deeper game-plan which will be developed in Volume Two. Finally, maybe I'm missing something but where did the Terminator on Page 17 come from?

The only hint given for TERMINATOR VOLUME TWO is that Sarah Connor might appear in it and that it will be out in 1991!

OK, so if you want to track down the comic what do you do? You'll need to go to a specialist comic-shop but it's unlikely that they'll have a complete set in, the best bet is going to a comic-mart. Cost isn't expensive, somewhere around Six Pounds for a complete set.

Alternative I suspect that at some stage Terminator will be released as a Graphic Novel, certainly Aliens and Predator have already been released in this format. This should then be available through the better general bookshops. Finally, Dark Horse have rereleased some of their material as a monthly A4 sized magazine which is available in newsagents. Whilst Terminator has so far not been included amongst the reprinted material it can't be long before it is. So, it's just a matter of deciding if you want to get the original comics or a reprint version.

### CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

John Arcudi---writer.  
Paul Guinan---inker.  
Chris Chalenor---colorist.

Chris Warner---penciller.  
Karen Casey-Smith---letterer.  
Diana Schutz---editor.

Terminal Cases, c/o Dark Horse Comics, 2008 SE Monroe Street, Milwaukie, OR 97122, USA



## THE BALLAD OF POLY NOMIAL

((I don't know who wrote this, but I came across it in John Brav's EMAIL SF-APA and apparently it's very old. You don't need too much mathematical knowledge to get most of the "jokes"....))

Once upon a time (1/t) pretty little Polly Nomial was strolling across a field of vectors when she came to the edge of a singularly large matrix. Now Polly was convergent and her mother had made it an absolute condition that she must never enter an array without her brackets on. Polly, however, had changed her variables that morning and was feeling particularly badly behaved, ignored this condition on the grounds that it was insufficient and made her way amongst the complex elements.

Rows and columns enveloped her on all sides. Tangents approached her surface. She became tensor and tensor. Quite suddenly, three branches of a hyperbola touched her at a single point. She oscillated violently, lost all sense of directrix and went completely divergent. As she reached a turning point she tripped over a square root which was protruding from the erf and plunged headlong down a steep gradient. When she was differentiated once more she found herself, apparently alone, in a non-Euclidian space.

However, she was being watched. That smooth operator Curly Pi was lurking in a product. As his eyes devoured her curvilinear coordinates a singular expression crossed his face. Was she convergent, he wondered? He decided to integrate improperly at once.

Hearing a vulgar fraction behind her, Polly turned around and saw Curly Pi approaching with his power series extrapolated. She could see at once by his degenerate conic and his dissipative terms that he was bent on no good.

"Eureka!" she gasped.

"Ho, ho!" he said. "What a symmetric little polynomial you are. I can see you are absolutely bubbling over with secs."

"Oh sir!" she protested. "Keep away from me. I haven't got my brackets on."

"Calm yourself my dear," said our smooth operator. "Your tears are purely imaginary."

"i i," she thought. "Perhaps he is homogeneous then?"

"What order are you?" the brute demanded.

"Seventeen," replied Polly.

Curly leered, "I suppose you have never been operated on yet!" he said.

"Of course not," Polly cried indignantly. "I'm absolutely convergent."

"Come, come," said Curly. "Let's go off to a decimal place I know and I'll take you to the limit."

"Never!" gasped Polly.

$P(x) = ax^2 + bx + c ; \quad \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!} a^n ; \quad \iiint f(x,y,z) dx dy dz$ <hr/> $A \in M^n \quad  A  = \prod_{j=1}^n \lambda_j ; \quad \sin \pi x$ <hr/> $\varepsilon \quad \alpha \quad \beta \quad \sigma \quad \mu \quad \eta \quad \delta \quad i^2 = -1 \quad \sqrt[n]{1} = ?$
--

"(\*5=!!" he swore, using the vilest oath he knew. His patience was gone. Coshing her over the coefficient with a log until she was powerless, Curly removed her discontinuities. He started at her significant places and began smoothing her point of inflection. Poor Polly. All was up. She felt his hand tending to her asymptotic limit. Her convergence would soon be gone forever. There was no mercy, for Curly was a heavy sde operator. He even went all the way and did a contour integration. Curly went on operaing until he was absolutely and completely orthogonal.

When Polly got home that evening her mother noticed she had been truncated in several places. But it was too late to differentiate now. As the months went by, Polly increased montonically. Finally she generated a small but pathological function which left surds all over the place until she was driven to distraction.

The moral of the story is this: if you want to keep your expressions convergent, never allow them a single degree of freedom.

The End.



"A MATTER OF HONOUR"  
BY MARK NELSON

This article deals with problems in the field of GMing and more loosely with Publishing/Publisher ethics. The first three come from GMing problems that I have faced recently (comments welcomed), the middle two from recent issues of Springboard and the last from the page of Eclipsor.

"The Rules of War"

Recently a player had the audacity to ask for a holdover because I had misadjudicated. The player objected to the order F(Gas) SF (Spa,sc). I wrote back pointing out that under the 1971 rules of Diplomacy (which are the ones recognized by my Houserules) this was a perfectly legal order and could the player send in a set of orders pronto?

The player concerned wrote back.

*"I am sorry but you are WRONG. I have always trusted your adjudications until now and cannot understand why you allowed this support. I don't have the original rules handy but the Gibson 1989 rules state that 'IN PRACTICAL TERMS A UNIT MAY GIVE SUPPORT TO ANY AREA TO WHICH IT MAY MOVE ITSELF' "*

*"F(Gas)SA(Spa) is legal as armies can act on both coasts so F(Gas) can move to where the army is. F(Gas) SF(Spasc) is legal but F(Gas) SF(Spasc) is NOT."*

*"I would greatly appreciate a neutral GM to give a second opinion as I am unwilling to accept the adjudication as it stands. Iain Bowen, perhaps? As my mentor, he stands in a position of authority on Diplomacy. Or some other non-Nelson (no insult on James, but I assume you both learnt the same way)."*

*"As an aside, are the following legal:-"*

- (a) F(Yor)SF(Lpl)
- (b) F(BAR)SF(StPnc)
- (c) F(Ven)SF(Fie)
- (d) F(Mar)SF(Gas)

*and why not?"*

Now my Houserules allow a player who is in dispute with a GM to appeal to an outside arbitrator, but in this case I declined the request; sending the player concerned a photocopy of the relevant section of the 1971 rules.

The rules are explicit:

*"3(b) PROVINCES HAVING TWO COASTS....A fleet which may move to one of these provinces may "support" an action in that province (...) without regard to the separation of the coastline..."*

Of the four given support orders only (b) is legal.

All perfectly clear, and the matter was cleared up without hard feelings on my part: the diplomacy rules are not always perfectly clear and the rulebook could be laid out better. A GM should never feel aggrieved if a player questions an adjudication through lack-of-knowledge, but should give the reasoning behind the adjudication as clearly as possible.

## "A MATTER OF HONOUR"

As for the Diplomacy rules, the summary sheets in the late 1980's editions seem to be misleading.

But this does emphasise a point, players should read Houserules! Not only do my rules quite clearly state that I use the 1971 rulebook but I go on to say (Section B (1.1)) *"...If your rules are not 1971 and you think that there may be differences between the two sets the GM will send you a copy of the 1971 rules for cost."*

A player who orders on the basis of an incorrect explanation in a new rule-book has only himself to blame. I am told that the new rule-books specifically forbid the 'unwanted convoy', but since I use the 1971 rulebook I recogniz2 this ploy as being perfectly legal. A player complaining on the grounds that his rules forbid a tactic has no cause for complaint.

This principle applies to other games where it is often the case that different editions differ on certain points. It is the GMs responsibility to tell players which edition he is using and the players responsibility to obtain these rules, this applies more to boardgames than, say, diplomacy variants where the GM can readily distribute rules to players. For example there are significant differences between different editions of Kingmaker...make sure you're using the same set as the GM!

### "Does the GM have an opinion?"

In a diplomacy variant, in what may turn out to have been a critical season, a player submitted a General set of retreat orders which stated in their fullness read "any".

A unit had to retreat and without thinking about it I disbanded the unit. That disband may have given the game to another player and the disbanding player has indicated an interest in appealing to an outside arbitrator.

My justification for disbanding the unit is two-part. Houserule (B3.1) states that *"Retreats may be made conditional on the preceding moves, provided the GM is not required to form a conclusion..."* By stating "any" the player is forcing the GM to form a conclusion about the game. Does the GM generate a random retreat order or decide where the best place to retreat is, and in this case how does he reach a conclusion? Of course, the bottom line is that disbanding a unit is a legal retreat option. I will agree to go to arbitration if pressed, but feel that the adjudication is clearly correct.

Now if a player sends in general retreats orders of "alphabetical order" or even "random" these are perfectly acceptable, the GM is not asked to give an opinion, but the order "any" is ambiguous and so puts the GM in an untenable position.

### "An unreasonable demand?"

Although the non game-only issues of The Mouth Of Sauron are sporadic, until recently I have always been proud that game-only issues were produced regularly. Alas, this has not been the case over the last nine months. Unfortunately there was a three month gap between issues at one stage. The next turn a player's orders arrived three days after the deadline and came with the message that *"In view of the turn-around of last issue I think that it would be unreasonable of you to NMR me. If you do so I will resign from all your games..."*

## "A MATTER OF HONOUR"

Now, I had not yet adjudicated those games (I had been away), so I accepted those orders. What would I have done if I had adjudicated those games? Houserule (A2.12) states that...

*" A deadline will be set for orders to reach the GM. Adjudication will be ASAP after 1st post. Orders received late but posted in good time (....) will almost always be accepted, if they arrive before the zine is mailed to the players. Otherways orders arriving after the deadline will only be used when the game has not been adjudicated."*

So it's quite clear, I could accept the orders as I had not yet adjudicated.

However, Houserule (A1.9) states that: "...Abuse of the GM or Publisher is also grounds for expulsion from a game..."

The letter is clearly abusive and contains an attempt to blackmail the GM to provide an adjudication favourable to the player concerned. I gave serious thought to expelling the player from all his games and confiscating all of his credit. However in the end I decided against this course because (a) I felt guilty about my reliability in recent months and (b) I had not yet adjudicated. However players abusing the GM should be aware of my Houserules, I'm not going to stand for it and you can accept to be thrown out of the game and be classed as a drop-out.

## "Arbitration"

One thing which I have considered as a result of the above cases is a change to my Houserules on arbitration. Whilst it is a good idea to have a method to resolve disputes I am concerned that players might appeal regardless of the merit of their case. I have been thinking of requiring all players going to arbitration to send in an "Appeals Deposit" of five pounds (similar to how appeals are dealt with in Bridge). If their appeal is successful they get their money returned, if not they lose it for wasting my time.

However Mark Firth tells me that he dislikes this idea, the concept of the right to appeal being linked to an ability to pay for that right doesn't seem to be fair. So before I update my houserules (planned for January 1992) I'd welcome comment on this point.

"To Standby or not to standby, that is the Question".

In SPRINGBOARD 46 (March 1991) Michele Morris, made the following points about the use of standbys. (She was the GM in the recently finished 1968BD.)

*"The game was, alas, marred by the large number of dropouts... This game illustrated at least two of the reasons why I think the use of standbys is flawed. The intended purpose of using standbys is to prevent the game from being spoilt by dropouts... each time a standby was brought in the game was quite significantly disturbed and not necessarily for the better. Secondly... when Andrew was brought into the game he was jumped on heavily and rapidly eliminated despite what I am sure were his best efforts."*

MICHELE MORRIS cont "Even Stuart ((Eves, a SB)), an excellent player, was only able to negotiate survival not growth. The notion of standbys ignores the fact that players have made plans, formed alliances and built up real-world relationships within a game."

"It is very hard for any standby to overcome the momentum of the game and turn it to his advantage. Frequently standbys have too few units to survive long enough to have any real chance of success. Quite simply, it is unfair, on the Standby and on the existing players."

I do not intend to write on why standbys are a good thing, but I think it is worth spending some time pointing out the flaws in this 'argument'.

One of the aims of prison sentences is to prevent life from being disturbed by crime, yet each time a trial is held life is disturbed (and already has been disturbed). Are we to conclude then that because prison sentences do not prevent a disturbance from occurring that we should ignore criminals? No, of course not.

The argument that Michele concentrates on is that Standbys come into a game which already has alliance-structures and that their position may be very small and delicate; hence we must ask is it really worth putting time and effort into a standby position as it is quite likely that you won't get much return on your investment. This is not an argument against using standbys; it is an argument against being a standby. The difference is subtle, but important

Yes Standby position may be small, they may be caught between pre-existing alliances which can't be broken; but surely it is up to the potential standby to decide if he wants to take on a position and NOT up to the GM to decide that it's not worth asking for a standby?

Personally, I am quite happy to take any standby position; even if it is a two or three unit power that is going to be eliminated in two seasons. The standby is not making a substantial investment with no return, firstly the amount of investment may be very small and secondly there is always a return for taking over standby positions. This is particularly the case for novices. One of the main reasons I take up standby positions is that I haven't played in many diplomacy games and I welcome the opportunity to study new situations.

Does the use of standby players "ignore the fact that players have made plans, formed alliances..."? I don't see that it does. A standby player takes over a position in a game where diplomacy has already set up a diplomatic-position. Yet if the originally player continues then he is playing in exactly the same diplomatic set-up, so is there any difference between the two situations?

Finally I must comment that SPRINGBARD position on the (ab)use of standby players is very strange. In the same issue, a 9 centre Russia is put into CD leaving A(10), E(1), F(10) & I(4). The GM comments that "I do not feel that the Russian position is such that it is possible to call a standby player -- Russia owns only one home centre, and the rest of you are all heading his way, so it wouldn't really be fair to throw a strange player into this situation. Hope this doesn't upset anyone too much."

Whilst it would certainly upset me if I were playing in this game, I wonder if the GM of this game really understands why GMs should call Standby players (as opposed to why players want to be standbys). This is a very strange decision.

"A MATTER OF HONOUR PAGE FIVE"

" Silence on the Western Front"

In Ode 124 (April 1991) John Marsden comments that "What is noticable, however, is the extent to which zine editors no longer write to each other in the way that they used to. I think this is sad; mind you, I'm as guilty as any other."

Indeed, I was intending to make the very same point but with regard to a slightly different area. One thing which I tend to disprove of is editors objecting to comments in one zine and then going to comment on them in their own zine. I have always thought that if you object to something in one zine then you should write directly to the editor. If the topic qualifies as "Hobby News" then you have grounds for commenting on it in your own zine, but I still think a letter to the editor is called for. If nothing else, letters to the appropriate editor open up a channel for discussion and can prevent editors making harsh comments in public which they latter regret. I can think of countless instances when an initial letter would have cleared up a misunderstanding without the need for public argument.

Recently I printed some scathing comments about Springboard and Danny Collman. This wasn't in response to anything that had appeared about me, but about one or two points that had cropped up. However I also wrote a letter to Danny at the same time, covering the same points. Danny replied to my letter in Springboard. I rang him up and the matter was cleared up. Then in Springboard 45 (February 1991) he prints the following...

"...Mark Nelson of 'Mouth of Sauron' fame, seems to have decided that I am myself hobby news, and that I am ripe for a feud. I'm not the only person he has been having a go at, not by a long shot, but since he mentions me by name a few times, as well as Springboard, I feel it is necessary to indicate to you what is going on."

"I really don't mind Mark Nelson or anybody else discussing in their zine what I have said and/or done. If it is considered to be Hobby News, then Hobby News it is. I DO mind my words being twisted, or even the meaning of the words being twisted..."

Now I don't object to Danny commenting about me in his zine, or that he even wants to be so bold as to use the f-word in public (although I am sure that many of his novices will have been very shocked at such foul behaviour). However I am suprised that in the time between my original comments and his published response he never contacted me.

Did he write me a letter when I printed my comments (November-December 1990), did he reply to two letters I sent him on the subject and did he make any comment when I rang him up? No, he waited to make some comments in his own zine.

I am sadden by this behaviour, especially as it comes from someone who likes to emphasis 'politeness' in zines.

Althoug not directly related to what John intended, the loccking of zines, it links in. Was Danny too busy to write? Did he want to write? Why does he want to start a feud? Perhaps after 45 issues of the genial editor, the real Danny Collman is coming out?



THE REAL NANNY?



## "A MATTER OF HONOUR PAGE SIX"

### "ABUSING THE PLAYERS"

It is not improbable that a GM will make at least one unpopular decision which someone objects to, particularly in the field of variants and complex boardgames. How should a GM respond to this objection? A GM shouldn't be cross with an objection, a GM does not have a God given right to be correct all-the-time and it's possible that something has been overlooked. A GM should treat his players as he would expect to be treated as a player by another GM.

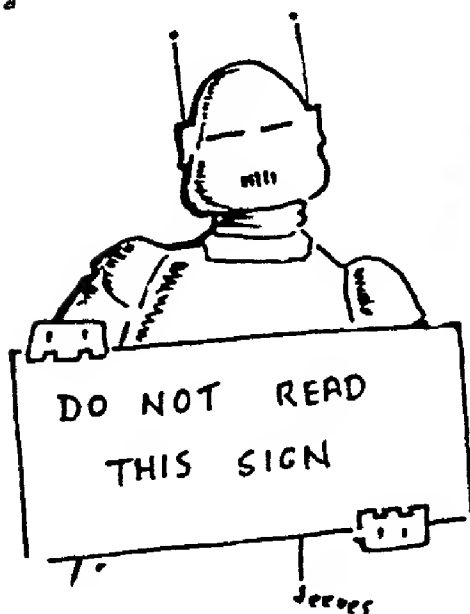
A GM needs to be particularly carefully when printing a player's comments on an adjudication, after all the typist gets the final say and so the GM should not be too hostile. I particularly feel that a GM who runs a warehouse zine that emphasis good gming needs to be particularly carefully.

Paul Willey in the late Eclipsor made a series of comments that went too far. Perhaps he didn't want the concerned players to play in his zine again, fair enough, but he should have also considered what effect his comments would have on potential players reading his comments.

In a series of disagreements about the adjudication of a VAIN RATS game Paul refers to "the ubiquitous and argumentative Mr Conlin". At an earlier Stage when Barry queried the redefining of a power Paul comments "I think he means re-re-defining."

At the start of a player's Endgame Statement, an endgame statement that just happens to be critical of the GM, Paul comments "Edited to try and get his meaning across in correct English" and at a latter stage injects "What the Hell is that sentence supposed to mean? I'm getting fed up with trying to understand and rewrite his appalling English -- and the use of the term English is an inexactitude!" When the same player comments that if a player had played more aggressively he might have won Paul adds "He did, in a three-way draw"

All in all, only very minor comments but they're all petty and all add-up. I don't believe that a GM should treat players in the way that Paul did. It certainly doesn't encourage me to either play again in Eclipsor or comment adversely on a rule-change or GMing problem.



## BUT DO READ THE HR'S

Or Else....



## BRIDGE

### "A LEADING QUESTION" BY ROB DOUGLAS

What would you lead, as East, after the following auction?

Love All	West	North	East	South
	1C	*	1S	2D
	----	2N	----	3N
	----	----	----	----

Your hand is:

S AJ9642    Normally it is correct to lead partner's suit unless there  
H T74        are sufficient reasons to lead your suit.  
D 84        Is this such a situation?  
C J6

### "DECLARER PLAY (1)" Solution By PER WESTLING

*Last issue I asked how you would play 3NT on North's lead of 5S. South playing 5H. Per provided the best answer.*

S AJ9    S Q  
H Q62    H KT43  
D Q63    D KJ952  
C AQJ4   C KT3

*"Win with the Ace and play a low Club to the ten. Then play a low diamond towards the Q. If South goes up with the Ace you have nine tricks, so if he has the Ace he must play low. If North has the Ace he has no winning play (a Spade gives the contract and on any other return I can play a heart to make 1H, 2S, 2D & 4C) so he ducks. The Queen holds the trick."*

*"I then enter table by playing CJ to CK and play a small heart towards the Q. Again if South has the Ace he must duck, and if the HQ wins I can play a diamond to secure the contract. Therefore the only difficulty arises when North plays the HA."*

*"If North continues with a heart I win and play a high diamond. Regardless who wins at most the defence gets one more heart trick (either they're 3-3 or if they're 4-2 or 5-1 and the HT protects the suit). This gives me 2S, 1H, 2D & 4C for nine tricks."*

*"If North returns a Club I cash the Clubs and then a high diamond, if this holds I can then cash HK for my ninth trick. If North wins the diamond then a Spade return gives me my ninth trick so he plays a heart which I win with the King and then play on diamonds. At some stage the opponents must give me my ninth trick. If South wins and exits with a Spade I win with the Queen and cash a high diamond (if necessary) with HK as entry to dummy."*

*"I think I covered all the possibilities although I don't have the problem to hand as I write this so the last part may not be quite correct."*

## DECLARER PLAY (2)

BY Rob Douglas

How do you play 5C on the lead of SQ?

NS	GAME	West	North	East	South
		----	-----	1S	2C
		2S	3C	----	3H
		----	4H	----	5C
		----	-----	----	

DECLARER	DUMMY
S A72	S 5
H KJ8	H A652
D T	D KJ6532
C AK8763	C QT

A LUCKY BREAK  
BY Per Westling

In Sweden the national teams of four league has four divisions. There is one Division I, three Divisions II and so on with Division IV being played locally. I play in Division III as I have a new team.

My worst moment in a recent match came on the following board. The bidding went 1S(RHO)-P-2S (RHO)-X-P-P-P

I held S QJT8 H Qx D Kxxx C Q98 and was vul vs non-vul. What to do? I choose to pass.

DUMMY	
S xxx	I started with SQ and after playing two high Spades (partner discarding 6C) Declarer played CK
H xx	(partner playing small) and then a small club
D Qxxx	to the Ace!!! Small heart to the Jack. This gave us
C AJTx	2S. 3H. 1D for one DOWN!!! Phew...

PER	
S QJT8	At the other table our team-mates made 3S. With
H Qx	luck like that you can't lose... Had I bid 3D
D Kxxx	that would probably have cost 200 or 500 so I
C Q98	had no easy choice!

DECLARER	MARK NELSON.
S AK9xxx	I would have passed in Per's position
H KJxxx	although his partner appears to have been a little
D x	light for his competitive double, especially at
C Kx	the given vulnerability! Doubtless he claimed the
	credit for a good bid afterwards....

\*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*    \*\*\*

This is the last issue for: DOUG ACHESON (CANADA): Sorry, but I don't really find Clandestine Activities that interesting even on the infrequent occasions that it appears. I'll still play in the Intimate game, but since that hasn't moved for over a year... BOB BLANCHETT (AUSTRALIA): Subscription runs out this issue. XAVIER BLANCHOT (FRANCE): Haven't seen a copy of your zine since October, yet I know you're still publishing! Have you cut-trades, lost interest or sent the zines to my old Bath address? DON WILLIAMS (USA): Now you are no longer BNC there's no reason to keep you on the mailing list, unless you intend resume publication of Fiat Bellum and wish to trade?

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